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WARWICK.

BY

MANSFIELD TRACY WALWORTH,

AUTHOR OF

"HOTSPUR," "LULU," "STORMCLIFF," "DELAPLAINE," "BEVERLY," ETC., ETC.

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WARWICK.

A Novel.

BY

MANSFIELD TRACY WALWORTH,

AUTHOR OF

"HOTSPUR," "LULU," "STORMCLIFF," "DELAPLAINE,"
"BEVERLY," ETC., ETC.

"Oh, Woman! whose form and whose soul
Are the spell and the light of each path we pursue;
Whether sunned in the tropics, or chilled at the pole,
If woman be there, there is happiness too.

MOORE.

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WARWICK.

Chapter I.

—Her mere look
Strong as a monarch's signet, and her hand
Th' ambition of a kingdom. From all this
Turned her high heart away! She had a mind,
Deep and immortal, and it would not feed
On pageantry. WILLIS.

IT was midnight in the great city. The solemn strokes of the bell in the church tower, which heralded the fact, were almost lost to the ear in the wild howl of the winter gale. A young lady, tall and graceful as a princess, stood listening to them as they counted away the last seconds of the dying day. She was standing in the entrance of an oratory, and one fair hand held back the velvet curtain which divided the library from the sacred place of prayer. The sound of the bell had arrested her footstep as she was about to enter the unknown apartment, and she stood silently counting the strokes. When the hour was known, she boldly pushed aside the drapery and entered. She was amazed to find herself confronted by a life-size woman in marble. One of Michael Angelo's exquisite Madonnas was before her. It was a copy of the famous statue which stands upon the altar in the church of Notre Dame at Bruges. She cast a curious glance at the purple velvet hangings and the ebony and silver furniture of the small chamber, and then turned with a thrill of delight to study the Madonna. It was elevated upon a dais of purple velvet in the centre of the room, and from a large silver lamp on an altar at one side a brilliant light fell upon it, revealing all the exquisite details of the sculpture. The divine Mother was enveloped in the softest drapery. The child Jesus was standing between her knees;

her eyes were looking forward at the intruder, and her countenance indicated a queenly dignity combined with a winning sweetness, as if she would say, "Will not *you* also come to the gentle kingdom of our love?" Over her hair a handkerchief was thrown, the ends softly falling on her lovely neck and shoulders. Her garment was drawn tightly downward in folds from her knee to the point where the infant Jesus was standing on it.

The intruder paused for a long time before the statue in artistic appreciation and study. Then the poetic and religious element of her nature asserted itself.

"This is a chapter in marble from the Gospels," she murmured. "How effective upon the intelligence and the heart is the reproduction in material form of the truths of revelation! Oh that sweet face, that sweet face! God grant I may emulate her loveliness of character and her submission to the divine will. Uncle is right in his love for her, the Lily of Israel."

A shadow of doubt swept across her fair face as she continued her study and her reverie. After a time she murmured again, "But where will this logically and inevitably lead us?"

The response which at length she whispered to herself seemed to be born of the instincts of her devotional nature, rather than of a careful analysis of the conflicting arguments which had passed rapidly through her intellect.

"A God who has created in us the instincts of an æsthetical nature can surely never disapprove of our offering those gifts upon his altar. He *must* be worshipped acceptably through music, art, and flowers. The scholar dedicates to Him his peculiar gifts in the realm of languages; the orator his powers of beautiful utterance to move men's souls; and why, then, may not the sculptor and the artist employ their gifts in his service by gathering to his temples the fruits and flowers and sounds which have fallen to them from the borders of the ideal land? Ah, Church of Rome, too long have you monopolized all the beautiful and soothing adjuncts of worship!"

With the ease and grace of a wild fawn that has slaked its thirst at some new spring of crystal beauty in the forest, she turned to the contemplation of the other novelties of the strange chamber. Decided and well-instructed church-woman as she was, there was, nevertheless, to her a singularity in

the arrangements of the oratory, and a more remarkable display of religious symbols than she had ever seen. At her right hand was a miniature altar of carved ebony, with the "*Jesus Hominum Salvator*" represented in its centre by the three letters *I. H. S.* in silver. The white altar-cloth had a pendant edge of point lace. In the centre of it stood a large ebony cross, with the suffering Christ in ivory, exquisitely carved, hanging from its arms. The sacred hands and feet were nailed with silver nails. On either side, and supporting candles of the purest wax, were solid silver candlesticks, carved in representation of the Saviour carrying his cross, and other scenes in the history of the Passion. Upon the altar rested a Bible and a prayer-book, bound in dark carved wood, with silver clasps, and in the centre of the covers of each an antique cross in silver. At the foot of the altar, on the dark, velvet-like carpet, was a kneeling-cushion, evidently the gift of some fair hand, elaborately embroidered in purple and white silk.

As she turned to the left, something met her eye which startled her. She recognized it as a confessional from the latticed partition which separated a kneeling-bench from the priest's chair. It resembled the confessionals she had seen in the churches of the Roman Catholics, although it was open, being only a latticed screen between the kneeling-bench and the clergyman's seat, the latter being a gothic, ebony chair, with purple velvet cushion secured by silver tacks. The apparition of the confessional was evidently a shock to her, for she had never personally known of its employment in the Church of England. Her gray eyes dilated as she gazed upon it. Then, as if amused at her own timidity, she smiled, saying aloud: "Well, well! They told me that uncle was extremely high church; but I did not *dream* of this. I wonder what fair penitent is admitted here."

The sensations occasioned by this "evident leaning towards Rome" were quickly forgotten in the contemplation of a large painting hanging against the velvet folds on the wall of the octagonal room. The Saviour of the world was delineated there in his agony, bound to a pillar and scourged. As the genius of the artist and the sublimity of our Lord's humility gradually dawned upon her, she became conscious of a new emotion, a strange longing to sacrifice something of her own peace and comfort for the glory of God. She drew nearer to the picture, and, with the instinctive gesture

of a woman's pity, she clasped her hands before it. She realized her Master's sufferings in that moment, and for the first time in her life. The artist had given to the divine countenance that refinement and gentleness of expression which so many women idolize in men. The eyes were blue as the serene heavens of summer. The slightly curling and brown hair was misty, silken, and wavy as a girl's. The complexion was a clear, pure blonde; and the small, effeminate hands, which were clinched about the pillar in agony, were exquisitely fashioned, as if they were, indeed, the inheritance of a long line of princes, tracing their descent from David the king. But the sad, suffering countenance of Jesus, and, alas! the intense agony of the small, quivering woman's mouth, were not suggestive of the torture which men of ordinary muscle can sustain, but rather indicated that more exquisite agony of delicate nerves, and poetic sensibilities, and lofty pride, which shiver often, like the leaves, at only a breath of censure, or thrill with torture at the faintest touch of pain. So was the beholder constituted in every fibre of her frame; and, as she gazed, she felt the pain, and trembled in sympathy with every blow that fell upon the suffering Christ. A low cry burst from her lips: "Would to God that I might bear a portion of your agony, my Lord and Master! Grant it, O heavenly Father, that I may find favor in your sight!" But the face — the face — the sweet, pure face! It was forming its likeness upon her heart. It was there assuming the dignity of an ideal. Henceforth, in her life-journey, she could never worship any man, unless he bore in his countenance the likeness of this God, — this startlingly beautiful conception of purity and majesty. For such a face she could sacrifice and suffer. For such an idol she could bend her woman's pride, and worship. In her future heaven there could be but two stars, — an ideal God like to the suffering face close by the pillar of shame, and an ideal man struggling upward and onward to a union with that God. She fell devoutly upon her knees, and prayed that the emotions aroused by that picture might never die, and that a life of sacrifice and suffering here might win her a crown among the angels. Her prayer and reverie were long continued; and, when she arose and left the apartment, the eyes of the gentle Mother followed her as the closing drapery fell softly together behind her gentle footfall.

She traversed the library, which was dimly lighted by the red glare of the coal in the grate, and, reaching the hall door, cautiously opened it, as if her errand had been a secret one, and softly descended the stairs to the main floor of the house. She entered the front parlor, which was well lighted by the chandelier, and resumed her seat before the grate fire. She was a watcher for one who tarried out in the driving and fearful storm of rain and sleet. She was the only inmate of the house who was awake. Curiosity had prompted her secret visit to an apartment which she had been given to understand was free only to the invited. She had acted under an impulse which now she regretted. But her temperament was of the kind that shakes off readily regrets at what are only trifling indelicacies; and then, too, the suggestion that the privacy of the oratory was inviolable might have been uttered only in banter. She gazed thoughtfully into the glowing mass of coals for a few moments, and listened to the howling of the wind outside, as it rushed along the avenue, hurling the sleet against the window-glass, or rattling the sash. Then she resumed the reading of her book. In this position we will sketch her.

May Delano was an orphan, and an heiress. At the age of twenty she was alone in the world, with ample means to cultivate and enjoy the refined tastes which came to her also by inheritance. From her parents she derived her literary and artistic appreciation, and from them, also, she inherited her pride. She cherished firmly the belief that the consciousness of high birth tends to elevate and ennoble character. But she despised men of family position who lacked brains, or who frittered away talents merely because their circumstances released them from the necessity of exertion. She held to the doctrine that energy, ambition, and progress are the duty of every individual. Hence she shook off, with the ease and dignity of an empress, the society or attentions of that class of men who infest large cities, and whose sole ambition is to waste money and to vegetate. Young as she was, she was well known to artists and authors as a patroness of talent. She had relieved the distress of many in each class, and with such gentleness and delicacy that her memory was held in lasting veneration. From the walls of many a humble studio looked forth the sweet face of "the beautiful aristocrat," — a title given her by an artist who had enjoyed her kindness, and in gratitude painted her portrait for ex-

hibition at the "National Academy of Design," with this sobriquet attached to the frame. She merited the appellation from her height, her graceful carriage, her blonde complexion, the delicacy of her features, the proud movement of her small and exquisitely shaped head, and the fineness of the outline of her slight figure, which reminded one of the delicate proportions and perfect symmetry of a race-horse and a thoroughbred. On horseback she was superb, fearless, the wonder of men, and the envy of women. She preferred rapid riding; and her attendant groom found it no trifling matter to keep pace with her Her gray eyes were large and lustrous, and, in moments of excitement, dazzling, indicating genius, an ardent temperament, and violent passions. The long, dark lashes, which veiled their beauty, curled outward, and were of the same dark chestnut shade as her wonderfully luxuriant hair, which swept backward from her forehead without the slightest ripple, or suggestion of a curl. Her face was small, but strictly Grecian in its details; and her delicate mouth and thin, narrow teeth were a perfect mine of refinements and gentle suggestions. If one could be so fortunate as to win her love, that mouth, indeed, would be a paradise. But there was an elegant *hauteur* about her which rendered any anticipation of such a pleasant consummation presumptuous in the extreme. She was too fastidious in her tastes, too delicate in her nervous organization, and too keenly alive to the ridiculous in life, to be approached rashly. She might be won through music, — of which her pink shell of an ear seemed expressly created to be a critic, — or heroic conduct might conquer her. Mediocrity in anything would scarcely affect her heart. Extreme physical beauty would be a powerful auxiliary in taming her heart to beat for one. Her emotion in the presence of the suffering Christ may have indicated amply her devotional nature. A gentleman by birth and by noble and high-toned conduct, of refined tastes and spiritual instincts, of great personal beauty and grace of carriage and of address, would be most likely to win her favor. She was draped in deep mourning, which became her well. The recent death of her father had induced her to seek a home with her uncle, the rector of St. Paul's, — one of the most elegant and high-church congregations of the city. The Reverend Thomas Delano was a saint, — so said the ladies of his congregation, and who shall dispute the competency of gentle and self-sacrificing women to constitute

a fair tribunal of canonization? Certainly his church character was all that could be desired, inasmuch as his name was prominently mentioned in connection with a vacant bishopric. He was well known to be a supporter and advocate of the ritualistic movement which was making such tremendous strides in Old England.

May Delano, after reading for a few minutes, closed the book and let it rest in her lap. Her countenance was very serious as she gazed into the fire; for she had been reading, in French, the "History of the Spanish Inquisition," by Llorente. The glowing coals seemed to her imagination to be the same which shrivelled the flesh of heretics in the days when rival churches burned their enemies at the stake, and decided points of doctrine by the axe. The idea of torture by fire seemed to her sensitive nerves the most fiendish that the malice of men had ever devised. She shuddered at the thought, and then, to shake off the unpleasant feelings aroused by the book, threw it aside and walked to the window. A street-lamp was directly opposite the door of her reverend uncle's residence, and at the instant she pressed her forehead against the window-glass, in the act of looking into the avenue, she saw a man run rapidly down the steps of her home, and, gaining the pavement, ascend the steps of the adjoining house. In a few seconds she heard the door in the next house close as if the man had gone in. Thinking the stranger had ascended the steps of her uncle's residence to ascertain the number of the house, she thought no more of the matter, and, after peering for a time out into the storm returned again to her seat at the fire. At this instant a cry reached her ears which made her blood curdle. "Murder! murder!" It came faintly through the division wall of the two houses, but she could not mistake that most fearful of all human cries. The sound was immediately followed by a heavy fall, and then all was still again. Only the whistling of the gale and the rattling of the sleet were heard. She stood for an instant paralyzed with terror. Then, darting to the front door, she opened it, and called loudly for the policeman upon that beat. He was passing by at the moment of her call, and, when informed of the fearful sounds which had reached her ear, he hastened up the steps of the adjoining house. She could hear his loud and continuous jingling of the door-bell adjoining, and presently she heard the door opened for him. Then all was silence, and she could hear

her heart beat. Shivering in the cold breath of the gale, she was about to re-enter the house, when a wailing cry broke forth close beside her. Then she discovered that a basket had been placed in the narrow space between the two street doors of her uncle's house. In it was an infant, wailing piteously.

Fairly shivering with cold and terror at the tragedy being enacted in the next house, she carried the basket into the parlor before the fire, and, removing the covering which protected the infant, discovered that it was a female child apparently only a few weeks old. Its garments were of very fine material and elaborately embroidered. She doubted not the child had been abandoned at her uncle's door by some one who was aware of the clergyman's charitable reputation. Two or three little waifs of similar character had been found there before, and she knew they had always been baptized and provided for either by the Reverend Thomas Delano, or wealthy members of his congregation, to whom he had made application in behalf of the young Christians. There was no question, in her mind, of the connection between this little human deposit and the man who had entered the adjoining house. Hence her anxiety that the clue should not be lost induced her, as soon as she could collect her senses from the shock of the murder, to ring the parlor-bell vehemently for a servant. At length, after moments which seemed to her an age, a servant was aroused from sleep, and entrusted with the custody of the infant, who had considerately hushed its cries when the fire-light was manifested to it. May hastened then to the front door, and stood in the rain and sleet watching the entrance of the next house. The avenue was deserted; the policeman had not re-issued from the adjoining hall. Silence appeared to reign in the mysterious dwelling. In a few minutes more a muffled figure appeared on the street, with an umbrella, struggling against the storm. A cry of relief escaped her. It was her uncle. She narrated rapidly the apparition of the stranger and the basket, and told him of the murder-cry. He directed her to come under his umbrella and go into the next house with him. She acquiesced, and directly they stood before that fatal door while he rang the bell. There was some delay in answering his summons. Then the policeman opened the door, and, recognizing him, bade them enter.

"There has been some strange work here," he said;

"very strange. I can't make it out. The servant was aroused by my ringing the bell, or rather he said something falling waked him up, and he heard, he thinks, the cry of murder, but he was too scared to move until he heard me ring. When I got in the house I went all over with him. We found the gentleman and his wife sound asleep in bed. There is no doubt about that. I put my dark-lantern in their faces, and they were asleep, sure enough. There are two servant girls, and both of them were asleep too. There is no sign of blood that I can see, no violence, nothing out of the way, except this revolver, which I found lying at the head of the first flight of stairs. Nobody here knows its owner. See how it is marked. Isn't that J. H. N.?"

He extended to the clergyman a Colt's "five-shooter," of exquisite make, heavily mounted with silver. On the silver of the handle were engraved the three letters or initials of ownership, as he had said. At this moment the proprietor of the house appeared, and, recognizing the Reverend Thomas Delano, he said, with the excitement natural to such a sudden awakening after midnight: —

"Heaven knows what it all means, sir! There have evidently been two cries of murder heard. Robert was awakened by it, and heard some one fall, and I understand your niece — I suppose this is the lady — heard it through the wall of your house. Suppose we give the house a more thorough search."

There was not the slightest cause for suspicion in the manner of the last speaker; and, after being joined by his wife, the whole party, accompanied by the frightened and chattering servants, commenced a diligent search of the premises. The gas was at once lighted in every room of the dwelling, and no means left untried to ascertain the presence of crime. After an investigation of every apartment from cellar to garret, the search was abandoned, and the clergyman and his daughter withdrew with the night-watch, the latter bearing away with him the mysterious revolver to surrender to his superior officer. When May Delano had made provision for the abandoned child for the night, and was leaving her in charge of a servant-maid, it occurred to her to examine more closely the child's garments. In doing so she discovered, on a white silk quilt in which the infant had been wrapped, embroidered in the corner in delicate characters, the initials *J. H. N.*

Chapter II.

"O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day."

In an attic-room of a small house, in the city of New York, sat a poor author. He was dressed in garments of the cheapest material and make; and yet his clothes sat easily upon him, and became him well, so perfectly beautiful and accurately proportioned was his manly form, and so graceful and unstudied was every movement of his body. His height may have been five feet and eleven inches, and his broad shoulders indicated unusual muscular power. But there was a delicate finish to every limb, and a symmetrical rounding of his arms, which terminated in slender, effeminate hands, white and soft, and graceful as a girl's, a firmness and fulness of his lower limbs, whose ankles were perfect as those of an Apollo, and a perfection of elegance in the long, slim feet, which indicated, to a student of nature, that the man had sprung from a pure and cultivated race of men. This idea would be further confirmed by a glance at the proud and stag-like poise of the head, with its broad white forehead, with its perfect oval of a face, and with the fineness and gentle proportion of its features. The hair was a misty, wavy brown, and so silky in its texture that it may have been an inheritance from a gentle mother. The eyes were large, lustrous, "and deeply, darkly, beautifully blue." They gazed upon a beautiful landscape, or a lovely face with a soft, subdued radiance, or they flashed splendor at the utterance of a great truth, the enunciation of a heroic deed, or the sound of proud, swelling music. There were times, too, when a hazy melancholy ruled them, or a sadness filled them which would touch a woman's heart to the quick with sympathy. When once a woman had enjoyed a full view of those dark blue eyes, soft and lustrous as a gazelle's, and watched the varying lines of that small, Adonis mouth, and the girlish blonde of the complexion, she would remember that face after the lapse of years, and turn to catch stolen glances at its wonderful beauty. But to a woman who had enjoyed the presence of that face when all the passions of

the human heart had swept across its features, when the consciousness of mental power, the ocean-depth of sympathy, the rebuff of hauteur, the beam of kindliness, and the gentleness of love had been manifest there, there was danger, great danger, of that loss which exceeds all other losses, — the loss of peace of mind. To most men a vision of manly beauty is a joy; and even for them there is a charm in the male human face which may be a secret foe in undermining the citadels of judgment and prudence; but to women manly beauty and grace are gods of power, and when combined with intellectual and physical valor they are omnipotent. This statement refers not to the strength of women which is derived from divine grace.

Consequently, the picture of the poor author, as he sat there so solitary and so beautiful, suggested the thought and justified the conviction that, whatever might be the result of his intellectual struggle with men, he would stand a very fair chance to gather female followers to his train. No disparagement is intended to the intellectual and spiritual appreciation of women. Heaven knows they have frequently detected the dawning of genius, fostered the growth of intellectual power, and encouraged the timid steps of the *litterateur* when stupid and bigoted men have turned contemptuously away, or remained for the purpose of trampling out intellectual life in the struggling. In the realm of controversy they may be, as a class, non-combatants; but over the field where poets and authors contend for the deification of the ideal, the pure, the devotional, the heroic, the sublime, and the beautiful, women shine as the holy and glistening stars of the heavens to cheer the victors.

After several hours of diligent writing, with occasional episodes of silent reflection, when the blue eyes seemed fairly to blaze in the intensity of inspiration as he looked upward towards the centre of beauty and power, the author laid aside his pen. He was weary. Presently the heavy booming of the fire-bell met his ear. He regretted that it was not the stroke of the city clock, that he might learn the time of night. The old monitor in the church tower is the only watch of the poor. He listened, for a time, to the heavy, solemn peal of the fire-alarm, and then, glancing over his table, noticed the newspaper which had been given to him by an acquaintance on the street. He thought to examine the headings of the news, and then retire to his

"bunk." He opened the sheet, which was one of the leading literary authorities of the city and State, and read silently for a few minutes. Then his eye dilated with surprise, as he exclaimed: —

"My book noticed here, in 'The Register'! a long article too. Wonder is crowned king, and poverty stares."

He fairly clutched the paper in his eagerness. Was he dreaming? Was the flickering lamplight true to its mission? His heart leaped up as he read again the title of his first-born at the head of the column of literary notices. "New Books." "Murmurs from the Deep Sea; by Iconoclast."

His eyes hurriedly ran down the column. He soon appreciated it all. His book was condemned by the critic in unmeasured terms of reproach. It was characterized as sensational, unhealthy, immoral in its tendencies, and "boshy." Not one line of approval was given to the book, or to any imagery in it. The object evidently was to class it so decidedly with the highly flavored sensational issues of the day that the tens of thousands of cultivated people who looked to that newspaper as their proper guide in selecting works of light literature to while away their leisure hours, would never think of looking out for the book again. Time is too precious, and the floodgate of light literature from the press too wide open, for readers to waste their spare hours in the perusal of anything but the real scintillations of genius.

His head was bowed upon his hands, in utter wretchedness and disappointment. All his weary hours of toil had been wasted. No publisher would again risk his funds, or his reputation for literary discernment, by the publication of a work from a source so sternly and ably censured. No more hope of gaining bread from literature. The future was dark indeed. He who had imagined himself the stern champion of virtue in his book was pointed out as the herald and caterer of vice. It was too much for flesh and blood, too much for a high-toned pride like his, to endure calmly and patiently. He trembled from head to foot. His nerves were unstrung; his personal dignity was outraged. He felt humiliated, hopeless, frantic with agony. "O merciful God!" he gasped out at length, "have pity upon me, for men are indeed without mercy! Had they partaken of thy divine nature, justice would have been tempered with

mercy. But no! no! I have done *nothing* worthy of praise. The conceptions which to me were pure, exalting my own life-purposes as I penned them, are misunderstood, or wilfully ignored. What weary nights and days I toiled on, and to no purpose! I shall never rise to honor, never aspire again to gain the intellectual temple. O my God, would it not be better for me to die now, before life has become so embittered by disappointment that right and wrong shall become blended as one and the same thing in my soul!"

The exquisite torture of that hour is known only to those who aspire after literary fame, and find their efforts turn to ashes in their hands.

Constant Earle was undergoing in that hour of disappointment no ordinary keenness of mental distress. He had been born and reared in affluence. Carefully and splendidly educated, he had borne away the first prizes of his "Alma Mater." As he left the collegiate shades for the world of action, men said, "There goes one of the most fortunate young men in this State. He will inherit a large share of a large fortune. He has an immense circle of friends, through his powerful family associations, to aid him in life. He has a clear and capacious intellect, he is a close and logical reasoner, he has literary taste and appreciation of a high order, and he is unquestionably and emphatically ambitious. He must and will be an honor to his family and to his State." And what was the result of all this flattering prediction?

At the age of thirty he was in a garret of a great city, with starvation shaking her bony finger at him, with his useless book, spurned by the leading literary organ, lying beside him, and with his beautiful head, his manly, intellectual head, bowed in agony. No doubt his lovely mother, from her seat beside the great white throne of God, leaned towards him; no doubt her angelic eyes of blue peered through the vast realms of space down, down to his lonely chamber, and she asked of God to let this first and bitter chalice of his agony be removed, and that one ray of hope might be permitted to glimmer through the garret, and through his heart; no doubt she feared the wild revulsion of a nature like to his. "A scoriac nature God gave them, compounded of glory and shame."

By the last will and testament of his father, a renowned and affluent merchant of the metropolis, he was entirely

ignored, and the vast property of the merchant prince was given to the elder son. Even his lovely sister was passed by in the distribution of her father's estate, and the two disinherited ones were amazed to find themselves beggars, while a brother, who had never been a favorite with their father, was enriched; all was given to him with the exception of trifling legacies to collateral relatives. Vigorous efforts to have the will set aside had resulted in utter failure. No one could comprehend the strange disinherison, but the singularity of the devise was held by the court not to be sufficient cause to defeat the testator's intention.

The two unfortunates appealed in vain to their brother for assistance. The heir was utterly selfish, and turned a cold shoulder to their solicitations. The sister found a humble home with some poor relations, and finally succeeded in earning a scanty living from an employment in a bookbindery. The younger brother, whose life had been spent in the luxury of his father's home, or in travelling abroad, or in the dissipations of his city club, determined to exert his splendid talents in the precarious and arduous employment of authorship.

Luxury had proved fatal to the development of his talents, as it has to hundreds in the great city. The promise of his collegiate life had not been realized. He had vegetated, — a species of literary and refined vegetation, which had brought him in contact with books for which he had a natural taste, but which had been incompatible with earnest, persevering, arduous literary labor, that Hercules which rends from the mines on the hill of knowledge masses of gold, and silver, and precious stones. But now famine, actual starvation, was impending, and he was forced into the arena of labor. His temperament was sanguine, and he buckled on his new harness firmly and hopefully. He aspired to fame and fortune. They could hardly elude so powerful a pen as he was currently believed to wield. In college he had enjoyed the reputation of being the first essayist of his class. After his entrance into society, occasional productions from his pen had been favorably received, when the political excitements of the day had elicited them for the public press. He was a resolute soul, and he was not ashamed to toil for his bread. But unfortunately he selected that profession in which so many gallant barks have stranded or gone down; launched his boat upon that sea, where industry, watchfulness,

patience, religious trust in God, constancy, and time are no certain precursors of success. But because it was uncertain, therefore did he select it. The more arduous the struggle, the brighter the crown for the victor. Thus he reasoned; and, at the termination of his first year's experiment, he found himself occupying quarters in a wretched portion of the city, but startlingly near to the pure stars of heaven. It was a miserable attic, and the favorable opportunity of studying the eternal planets scarcely atoned for the discomforts of the place. To him a carpet was a fairy tale, a proper meal a memory only; for on a tiny stove, whose pipe was suffered to disgorge the smoke through a broken pane of his little window, he cooked for himself a chop, and then ate it with butterless bread, and washed it down with cold water. His palate had been for ten years educated to a keen perception of flavors and relishes. It could scarcely be expected that one year's abstinence from delicacies had qualified his stomach to hanker after the crusts of poverty, that hell of the gentle and the refined who have fallen to it from high places. One after another had the valuables of his personal wardrobe and dressing-table been sacrificed to the demands of hunger. His valuable books had followed next, till at last he retained the ownership only of his mother's Bible. She had given him a simple ring shortly before her death. This was now his sole visible symbol of the mighty monosyllable "gold." He had discreetly invested the little money in his possession at the time of his father's death, when his poverty was announced to him, in writing materials, and a suit of strong, coarse cloth, which promised to survive the wear and tear of many seasons. The firm and simple fabric had fought a glorious battle with the vicissitudes and storms of life; but now the intricate labor of the weaver was rapidly becoming manifest, and the suit of brown was fast approaching dissolution. The condition "seedy" had been passed, and the garments were separated from the designation or state euphoniously denominated "played out," by the mere forbearance of a nail-head, a door-lock, or the ragged edge of a dry-goods box. Nevertheless so glorious was the physical symmetry of the man, so fastidiously clean his skin from his daily ablutions, so carefully arranged his misty, curly hair, that the suit of brown in its reduced condition could not render him beggarly, — only sadly, pitiably beautiful. He looked the prince

in distress. Abstinence had reduced the fulness of his fair cheek, but, true to its ancient medical renown, it had given spiritual beauty to his features, greater clearness to his large blue eyes, and greater vitality and purer instincts to his brain. Sensual indulgences, at the age of thirty, tend to render men gross in appearance and grosser still in thought. These had been beyond Constant Earle's reach for an entire year. He was too proud to turn to drink for a narcotic for his troubles yet, and the fire of ambition was vaulting to his eyes too constantly to suffer any rival alcoholic fire to gleam from their magic beauty.

But the matter was becoming really serious. His book had been condemned. It would not secure him popular favor. His publisher had undoubtedly lost money by its publication. What should he do, now, to earn his bread? He must seek some clerkship, some place for which he was qualified. Alas! he knew how difficult was the accomplishment of that feat. He knew that hundreds were seeking employment in vain; that men of education were striving day by day to secure some position in which they could display their intellectual attainments, some place where they could earn something more than the pay of a common day-laborer; and that such were constantly disappointed. After the violence of his anguish had passed away, he raised his head from the table as the thought occurred to him that he might earn enough, as a copyist of law papers, to keep soul and body together, until he could wring from the hours proper for sleep time enough to complete another book. Perchance, in the goodness of God, some kind friend would step forward and furnish him sufficient means to secure its publication. Another effort was surely proper to be made, when he felt within himself such powers of imagination and description. The consciousness of genius is the *ignis fatuus* of its life, luring its possessor on through struggles with poverty, and contentions with critics, often leading him to a beggar's grave, when, in some humble, unknown sphere of action, he might have secured bread, and raiment, and obscurity. Some, conscious of their powers, finally subside into the monotonous life of the laborer and the drudge. Others, untamable and ever aspiring, struggle fiercely with their fetters, and die at last in the literary harness, poor, weary, broken-hearted. Others still, by the intensity of their purpose, and maddened by the inspirations which sweep across their

heart-strings in melody and beauty, trample upon the rules of health, and win recognition at the point of the mental bayonet, and then retire to the hospital with diseases of the brain, or drag out existence in imbecility. Constant Earle resolved to be one of the latter class. With a sigh he looked upward to his Creator. "Only aid me and encourage me to write in the interest of morality and religion, O my Father in heaven, and accept at last the broken fragments of my health and my strength in partial atonement for the talents I have trifled with, for the time and the moneys I have wasted, and for the evil I have done myself and others by the folly of luxurious indulgence. Thou, O my God hadst claim to the lost years of my life. Forgive me Hereafter I shall struggle to win men's hearts to Thee by my pen."

While the prayer lingered still upon his lips, the town clock struck eleven. The night was gloomy and cold, and yet a rap was heard at his door. When the stranger had entered, the author beheld the familiar face which haunts the abodes of financial distress or poverty. He was confronted by a Jew.

Chapter III.

What might be done, if men were wise—
What glorious deeds, my suffering brother,
Would they unite
In love and right,
And cease their scorn of one another!

CHARLES MACKAY

THE Israelite was short and muscular, dark-visaged and occasionally had an expression which suggested that he was cross-eyed, though in fact he was not, there being simply a peculiar cast in his eye, which vanished in a bright light, or upon closer inspection. Buying and selling had taught him caution in restraining his emotions; every look, every gesture, every shrug of the shoulders, in incredulity or uncertainty, had been carefully studied and employed in the interest of trade. He could look as unconcernedly upon a new coat worth at cost price sixty dollars, as upon a half-worn

one with the silk linings torn partly out and really worth twenty. No brightening of the eye, no nervousness of motion, betrayed the fact that he coveted the new glossy texture of the one above the dull color of the other. He had a wonderful tact in detecting instantly, and remarking upon the fact, that a new coat had lost a single button, that a slight stain had been made upon the bosom of a vest, or that a pair of pants had strained two stitches in the seam, although it was perfectly obvious that five minutes' labor would make each garment as good as ever. He was a buyer of second-hand clothing, jewelry, bedding, everything that had a money value and was not animate. The last adjective rendered some of his purchases far otherwise than good bargains, for some second-hand garments bear with them in their travels an animal that "beats the Jews," — the quiet, gentle moth. He had a practised eye for moth-holes, but these in their infancy sometimes baffle detection. He had a keen sense of smell for camphor, and when this was apparent he quickly remarked upon the doubtful character of the garment. The smell suggested age and moths in the same instant. He always carried the garment in hand to the window, carefully scrutinized it, inside and out, detecting the finger-marks of time upon it instantly, and pointing them out with a smile — a cunning, humorous smile — of detection, which was apt to create mirth, unless the poor victim was too close upon starvation to smile. The value of the choicest material and the most elegant make experienced fearful depreciation under the inspection and remarks of this German Jew. He was a disorganizer, a revolutionist in the circle of legitimate trade. His offered prices for second-hand clothes, which had been worn only half a dozen times, made a man question the morality and integrity of his own tailor. That a coat which last week cost sixty dollars in greenbacks should to-day be worth only five dollars, was an enigma surely. But remonstrance was only cut short by the earnest remark of the Hebrew: "I don't know if I can sell him at all. My customers don't like him cut dis way. I don't sell to gentlemen. No sir, dat is honest. Gentlemen go to the tailor for their clothes. I sells to common people. I am giving you a fair price, sir. I must live, and the clothes business is quite uncertain. I gives you good price. Very good." If a seller was so rash as to expose a whole pile of second-hand clothing for sale, he would receive little for them

indeed. The Jew always desired, after a careful inspection of each garment, to contract for the pile at one price. There was only one method of realizing a considerable sum of money in large barters with him, and that was to begin with an old pair of socks or a shirt, and sell him up to a coat or an overcoat, piece by piece, noting down with a pencil and paper every garment sold, and the price, and taking especial care that no other garment left its hiding-place till the one in hand was priced and sold. But no matter what amount could be wrung from the Jew by such precautions, the seller always felt justified in execrating the entire Hebrew race when the buyer had departed, loaded down with garments which had been sold for one fourth of what they were really worth.

The Hebrew looked cleanly, was comfortably and sensibly dressed for one in his business, and appeared to be from thirty to forty years of age. He removed his hat upon entering, bowed very civilly as he said "good-evening," but declined accepting the only chair in the room, which was courteously offered him. The author never forgot that he was a gentleman, and, though he knew that his guest had plundered him repeatedly in his transactions, he maintained the same quiet courtesy towards him. He never disputed the Hebrew's statements, never reviled his race or alluded to his religion. He never for an instant allowed the man to think that he suspected him of dishonesty, or that he believed him capable of driving hard bargains. If he thought the garment under negotiation valued too ridiculously low, he never remonstrated in loud tones, or made a single remark that could possibly offend or be remembered with bitterness. Nearly every garment that he had possessed at the time of his father's death, the contents of a large and elegant wardrobe, had been sacrificed to the cupidity of the Hebrew. An expression of sadness, of disappointment, of gloom, sometimes crossed his face at the smallness of the price offered him, and the buyer, instantly noticing it, always made some remark in mitigation or explanation of his terms. "I am sorry, Mister Earle, that I can't give you more, but really I can't sell him for much, — I am telling you the truth, sir, — I would not deceive you, — I would not lie."

And now the man had come, at the request of the author, to buy his last coat and his last pair of pants. With the excep-

tion of the rusty suit of brown in which he was clothed, he had no garments for the future. That coat and those pants he had saved to the last. It was his dress-suit. It was all that bound him to the society of gentlemen, — the few gentlemen who cared for him now that he had become so pitiably poor. In that suit he had dined with the few kind ones who remembered him, and offered to him the courtesy of an invitation. He had dined out for the last time. So stern and unrelenting was the pride that was born with him, so careful and accurate had been his observance of fashion and etiquette, that he would as soon have entered a gentleman's dining-room in his shirt-sleeves as to have gone there without a dress-coat. Nothing could move him from a purpose so essentially a part and a result of his character. He was actually and forever severing himself from the society of gentlemen. He knew it, and he looked inexpressibly sad, gloomy, hopeless. The companionship with refinement, elegance, and gentleness was being dissolved. There was not a laborer on the face of the earth, who was an honest man, with whom he would have felt too proud to sit down and dine. This was not the pride of his heart; but it was that keen sense of the fitness and proprieties of conduct and dress in refined society which had become a part of his nature. He could not change that nature. He could do nothing *outré*. For the best friend he had on earth, if really a true friend was left to him now, he would not have humiliated himself so far as to dine out without that dress-coat. There was one goddess for whom he reserved his devotion forever, — "Propriety." This singularity, this instinct, this pride, can only be comprehended by one who is at heart a gentleman. People who are "dregs" by nature, who are of coarse instincts, and yet clothed in fine linen and purple, can no more comprehend this pride, this sense of propriety, than they can understand the feeling of personal honor, or can know why it is wrong and rude to wound the feelings and prejudices of others.

And thus was Constant Earle relinquishing his hold upon that which is dearest to the heart of a gentleman, the society and companionship of his peers. It was all over now, and his last barter for bread consigned him to fellowship with the low, or to entire solitude. He stood silently, sorrowfully, before the keen-eyed Hebrew, as the man held up the dress-coat to the light, and offered for it the absurd amount "three dollars;" just one dollar more than he had given already

for the pants. He knew the Jew was inexorable when once he had stated his price. He said quietly, but with a tone which indicated the most fearful disappointment, "Take it; you may have it for that price."

The Hebrew looked up into that beautiful face which was vainly striving to suppress the anguish and the expression of despair. The charm of personal beauty must have found some cell deep in the heart of this child of Abraham where it could find recognition, for he said kindly, as he handed Constant the price of the garments, "I give you all I can; indeed, Mister Earle, I do." He turned to leave the attic, bearing away the gentleman's last suit; but the poor author called him back, saying, as he extended his hand, "You are going away, probably, for the last time; won't you shake hands with me? I really know nothing about the risks of your business, so I have no right to judge you. I believe you to be an honest man. Good-by, Rupener."

A warmth flushed up to the eyes of the Hebrew. An expression of pure human sympathy swept across his face as he warmly grasped the proffered hand, and said: —

"Mister Earle, you are a gentleman; your heart is honest; you do not hate my people; I am sorry for you; you always speak so kindly to me. I am a poor man, but when you want bread come to me, and ask me to lend you ten, twenty, fifty dollar, without any security, and I will do it. I believe in you; I will trust you; good-by!"

Without waiting for a reply, and to suppress some manifestation of feeling which had appeared to choke his last utterances, he opened the door and ran rapidly down the garret stairs. Constant Earle stood silent and amazed. The pure Christian kindness and charity of the gentleman's words had melted that heart of stone. His first friend after he turned his back upon society was a Jew.

Chapter IV.

What many a childless one would give,
If thou in their still home would'st live.

WILSON.

THE mysterious occurrences in the two adjoining houses on the avenue had the effect of bringing into more intimate communion the two families. The Reverend Thomas Delano had been acquainted with his neighbors two or three years, and knew them to be very worthy and respectable people, who had rented their dwelling from the agent of the owner, who was said to be travelling in Europe. Belonging, however, to a different church from their own, he had not chanced to be thrown often in their society. His niece, being a newcomer in that neighborhood, had never met them until the cry of murder brought them so strangely in contact. On the day following the abandonment of the infant at the door, Mrs. Secor, the new acquaintance of May Delano, came with her husband to call upon her, and to have a glimpse also at the abandoned child. She was a thin, dark-eyed, gossipy little woman, with no pretensions to beauty, and gifted only with plain, practical common-sense views of life and duty, with a kind heart and a sincere Christian character. She had no children, and devoted her life entirely to her husband and her church. She was aware that her life-partner was in comfortable circumstances, engaged in a lucrative wholesale grocery business, and solely intent upon saving money for no other apparent purpose than of dying as rich as the general run of merchants in that employment. She appeared perfectly content to second him in this idea, and lived comfortably enough, but without pretensions to style, society, or display. Her most luxurious indulgence was an occasional tea-party, where she displayed to her friends her fine silverplate, her talents in the art of preserving fruit, and her budget of church and society gossip. She was simply a type of the ordinary run of ladies who attend a fashionable city church, and never aspire to be leaders in that church, from the simple fact that they possess only the talents of followers, and are inherently humble and pious.

For her morning call she was arrayed in a black silk dress

and elegant camel's-hair shawl, the last a gift from her husband, and her smooth, dark hair was *theoretically* covered with one of the diminutive, black velvet, bugle-fringed scraps of the day, denominated bonnets. She wore kid gloves of a drab hue. There was nothing about the little woman that could in any way entitle her to the appellation "striking;" and, as she stood for a moment before the sofa in the act of meeting May Delano, who swept into her uncle's drawing-room with the simple dress of a mourner and the port of a princess imperial, a spectator could scarcely have avoided the reflection that, however un-American and obsolete the doctrine, some people were surely intended to outrank and to rule the masses.

The sudden and informal meeting of the past night, in the dwelling of her guest, unquestionably tended to soften the reserve and *hauteur* of Miss Delano's reception. Nevertheless Mrs. Secor was sufficiently impressed by the elegance of the young lady's manner, to realize fully that precipitate familiarity would be ill-advised and impolitic. She was, however, soon put at her ease by that gentleness of tone and address which characterize the true lady upon all proper occasions of courtesy, and when her husband had been also received, and turned over to the attentions of the Reverend Thomas Delano, who soon entered, she found that the motives of her visit were thoroughly appreciated and well received by the heiress. In response to her suggestion that she had been familiar with the care of infants, while residing with her sister, who was the mother of a large family, and that she would be happy to be allowed the privilege of taking care of the little waif until suitable arrangements could be made for a permanent disposal of it, the heiress informed her that the Reverend Thomas Delano was aware that a wealthy merchant of his congregation was anxious to adopt an infant, and finally leave all his property to it, provided a child could be found who would answer all his requirements regarding personal beauty and intelligence. There was little doubt that this gentleman would be satisfied with the personal attractions of the little stranger. At all events his decision would be known before nightfall, as a note had been despatched to him by her uncle early that morning. It was probable, moreover, that the merchant was already on his way to the clergyman's residence. Mrs. Secor was invited to visit the child in an upper chamber.

The two ladies, leaving the gentlemen in conversation, ascended to the apartment where a hired nurse had the infant in charge. No sooner had the eyes of Mrs. Secor fixed themselves upon the face of the child, who was held in the arms of the nurse, near to the grate fire, than she exclaimed:—

"Why, that is the perfect image of the Earle family. It looks exactly like Montrose Earle, who owns the house in which we live. The eyes are most assuredly his. The other features are more beautiful; still there is a decided resemblance. I have seen a picture of his mother, and this child is like her, remarkably like her. She is dead, but she was a most excellent lady. Do you know the family?"

"I never heard the name even," was the quiet response. "I never resided in the city until after my father's death. Probably my uncle knows them."

"Yes, yes," replied Mrs. Secor. "Every old resident of New York knows the Earles. They have been wealthy for several generations. But the last merchant was very prominent here. He was a bolder speculator than his father, and the money accumulated very rapidly in his hands. But he died rather suddenly, and disinherited his daughter and younger son; nobody knows why. The eldest son got everything; he owns our house. He is a singular being; he hates his own flesh and blood, and won't give them a cent. The brother and sister are wretchedly poor. Still he is a very excellent and accommodating landlord; he has been so very kind and civil to us, that my husband has been persuaded to let him have apartments in our house on the second floor. He has been fitting them up for some months; but he has not come yet to occupy them. You recollect we unlocked several doors on the south side of the upper hall in the second story when we were searching last night. Well, those are to be his rooms. He is going to have his meals brought to him from a restaurant. The house is too large for us, and he makes a great reduction in our rent. And this baby — you poor little pussy! you poor little dear thing! — yes, you look just like him — you do, you do. The eyes are his sure. What a fright I had last night! Is it not the strangest occurrence you ever *did* hear of?"

"Is he married?" inquired Miss Delano.

"Oh, no; a bachelor, a confirmed bachelor; but very civil to ladies, I believe. This house of ours was built by his grandfather. He was wealthy, too, and a good man to the

poor, — so I've heard, at least. Did you notice what taste Montrose Earle has? Oh, of course you didn't; you were too excited. But those rooms we went over last night are filled with pictures and cabinets and everything that is beautiful. He has been putting them in there for months. If you will come over some day before he takes possession you will be amused in examining his rooms. Everything is perfect in its way. Do come, and you may see many rare things. I have the keys, and I often have curiosity enough to go in there and look around."

May Delano had been listening attentively to her remarks, but all the while keeping her eyes fixed upon the infant, as its little head bobbed back and forth in its helplessness as the nurse held it up to the fire. But something besides Mrs. Secor's remarks had been engaging her attention also. She was endeavoring to follow out a clue in her own mind; she had seen somewhere a resemblance to this infant. She felt confident of that fact. Before her guest had finished her running commentary upon the Earle family the broken links of memory were reunited. She remembered when and where she had seen a likeness of the child. The little waif was, without question, a perfect fac-simile of the suffering, agonized Christ scourged at the pillar, only the little face was peaceful. Repose had settled upon the features. So must that Christ have appeared in his infancy as he sat in the lap of Mary, or swayed back and forth in her protecting arms.

By some singular fatality there was at that moment, beneath her uncle's roof, a painting wrought by a master-hand in some foreign clime, — an imaginary Christ, the offspring of an artist's brain, — and an infant which that artist never could have known, whose features were like a miniature copy of that foreign ideal. Could it be that Montrose Earle, the selfish, unfeeling wretch who had spurned his own brother and sister and left them to die of privation and starvation, could have been made in the likeness of that exquisite face which looked from the walls of her uncle's oratory? Was it possible that so contemptible a soul could be enclosed in a casket so beautiful, so pure, so ideal? She longed to see the man. A few brief hours had seen a star rise into her ideal heaven so transcendently lovely that every other star was eclipsed. Must that exquisite conception of the artist be forever dimmed by the knowledge that a similar face existed whose perfect features were only a mask to a mean, con-

temptible soul? It could not be. And yet she could not exhibit to her guest the secrets of the oratory. She could not bring Mrs. Secor face to face with the image scourged at the pillar, and demand to know if Montrose Earle resembled that divine loveliness. She had been herself an intruder there, and, perchance, her uncle would be deeply offended at her presumption and indelicacy. She could only remain silent and wait until chance brought this unfeeling brother before her eyes. Curiosity prompted her to accept Mrs. Secor's invitation to visit the apartments intended for this man. The veil of privacy had not yet been thrown over the entrance to those rooms. The divine face in the oratory had haunted her dreams. The eyes and mouth of the abandoned child recalled that painting so vividly that she longed to look upon one who was said to resemble the child. Here was mystery enough to arouse her female curiosity. She must and would look upon the face of Montrose Earle. This would, no doubt, be a matter of easy accomplishment, since he was soon to become their neighbor. In the mean time there could be no harm in inspecting these singular apartments. There was little doubt in her own mind that from these apartments had issued that fearful cry which had chilled her blood. Foul play had been going on there; and, though impenetrable mystery shrouded the deed, she could not have been mistaken in that last scream of mortal agony. Some one had gone to his last account, and every trace of the murdered man had disappeared, and his murderer, too, had fled. The criminal had escaped and hidden his victim. May Delano felt confident that her own sleeping-room, on the second floor of her uncle's house, was divided from the scene of a murder by only the thickness of the division wall of the two houses. Had she been sitting at the time in her own room, no doubt she would have heard still more distinctly the fatal transaction. She expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Secor for the privilege offered of again inspecting Montrose Earle's apartments, and intimated her wish to avail herself of that offer on the ensuing morning. After several minutes had been spent in the inspection of the infant, and Mrs. Secor had made some suggestions in regard to its treatment, the ringing of the street-bell admonished them that the merchant had probably arrived to examine the child with reference to its adoption. A servant soon confirmed this surmise, and the nurse was directed to bear her little charge

to the drawing-rooms below. The two ladies followed her downstairs, and into the presence of the trio who were awaiting them.

The clergyman was standing at the moment of their entrance with his arm resting upon the marble mantel-piece. He was a tall, thin man, with clear gray eyes and a remarkably serious and thoughtful countenance. There was nothing stern in his manner or features; still one could not look upon his thin, dark hair carelessly brushed back from his forehead, his pale and almost emaciated face, and his thin, white lips tightly compressed, without being impressed with the conviction that a sense of duty was uppermost in his thoughts, and that he was struggling through self-denial, abstinence, purity and charity of life, to win the favor of God. His demeanor was quiet and unassuming, his voice calm and modulated like low, sweet notes of music, and every movement of his limbs graceful and easy, indicating his descent from the same elegant and aristocratic stock as his niece. But it would not be just to form an opinion of the Reverend Thomas Delano's character and abilities from the calm, easy, thoughtful manner of the man in his own drawing-room. In his ecclesiastical character he was a power, a man of great eloquence in his pulpit, endowed with ripe judgment in his dealings with men, and impressing upon the female portion of his congregation with irresistible force the conviction that he was not afraid to attempt anything which he believed to be conducive to the honor and glory of God. He was not a sycophant of principalities and powers. He was no worshipper of wealth or station. He was an honest clergyman seeking to serve God. Although a known advocate of the modifications in the service of the Church of England suggested by the Ritualists, he was respected by his ecclesiastical opponents for his sincerity, his zeal, and his learning. No one questioned his motives, and his life was well known to be crowned with good works, devotion, and energy.

In conducting the services of his church he was simply and grandly beautiful in his utterances. His clear, sweet, eloquent voice, as it broke forth in the sublime language of his ritual, thrilled every listener and hushed every distracting thought. He had come to worship the King of kings. All felt it, and respected him for it. Little children loved to look into his calm gray eyes, and listen to his words of ad-

monition. The sick yearned for the sound of his voice. The mourners instinctively hushed the wail of anguish as he passed near. He was the friend of God, and God had afflicted them. He was a light, a comfort, a joy. He stood forth in the midst of a selfish world, unselfish, gentle, refined in his tastes, beautiful and cultivated in his pursuits, heroic in his life, a pure Christian priest and gentleman. And thus he stood leaning upon the marble mantel, and earnestly studying with his clear eyes the effect upon his merchant friend of the little girl whom Heaven had given him the disposal of; the little waif whom he was to start on the road to purity, and peace, and an angel's crown.

Motherless, fatherless, and beautiful, the little child rolled its deep blue eyes upon the merchant, the Christian, the friend, who had come to study it. It is very sad to be friendless and alone. The adult who is destitute of friends is pitiable enough. His or her lot is hard, God knows. But alas for the tiny, innocent, gentle life abandoned to the world! Some hearts there are, which do not beat in the breasts of mothers, which can pity the poor little foundling.

The gentleman who stepped forward curiously to examine the face of the little infant was a bachelor. He was a retired merchant. He could not have seen over fifty winters; still his dark and smoothly brushed hair was thickly flecked with gray. His eyebrows were wonderfully long and heavy and gray. Beneath them looked forth keen, restless eyes, of a light hazel hue, sparkling, and ever roving, like his thoughts and his conversation. He was thin and pale, nervous in every movement, and always on the alert. Nothing escaped his notice. He was closely shaven, the only beard allowed to grow being below his chin, — a broad tuft of gray hair to protect his throat. He possessed a fine, erect, military figure. He looked like a soldier, and his looks did not belie him. While a youth his adventurous spirit had sent him as a volunteer upon one of the wild and generous expeditions which sailed from the city of New York, to aid one of the South American republics in their struggles for liberty. Rumor had it that he won a name for reckless daring at that early age. Subsequently he found employment in one of his own country's wars as a soldier, and then as an officer. He was prominent as a staff-officer of a distinguished general of the United States Army from the State of New York during the Southern rebellion. He had accumulated wealth

in his business, being exceedingly methodical and enterprising; but his natural military spirit and his wonderful powers of combination and organization hurried him at times into the camp and the political arena. In both positions he was distinguished. He had now abandoned the military ambition, and was a prominent and admirable political partisan and leader. He was a tower of strength to his friends. He loved them excessively, and no labor, no sacrifice, no vigilance, no skill, was wanting when they were to be served. He seemed nobly and generously to live for them. His memory of a promise, no matter how trivial the occasion, was proverbial. He loved his political party from principle, and he knew its history. He was a scholar, a constant reader, a friend of churchmen, a friend of the struggling. He was plain and simple in his dress, and in the presence of ladies absolutely charming. It was a pleasant fact in his life that he respected and venerated women, this active, earnest, candid partisan and friend, who despised affectation and snobbery as he despised Pluto. He believed firmly in the intellectual power and the management and tact of the fair sex. At times Colonel Baldgrave indicated weakness in the throat or lungs, which caused his friends anxiety; still his powers of recuperation were wonderful. The painful cough would pass away. His friends, who loved him dearly, would smile again, and he was ready once more for activity, kindness, generosity.

Such was the well-known, straightforward, earnest merchant who came at the call of the Reverend Thomas Delano to look upon the little girl, gather the few facts of her brief history, and decide whether or not she should become the inmate of the house and the heiress of the property of the Baldgraves.

Chapter V.

To name an infant met our village sires,
Assembled all, as such event requires;
Frequent and full the rural sages sate,
And speakers many urged the long debate.

CRABBE.

THE fair, blue-eyed baby, with its thin, silky hair of golden hue, its round, plump shoulders, and its tiny feet

clinched tightly, as if instinct taught it that hands are made for warfare with the world, looked like some pure and gentle spirit from the world of light. She was robed in soft, misty white. The long dress was richly embroidered on the skirt and bosom in the semblance of ivy-leaves. Strange symbol this on the robe of an abandoned child! for ivy, in the language of flowers, typifies *wedded love*. Could the abandoned child be legitimate? This was the reflection of one only of the group that clustered about the infant, and that one was May Delano. Her instincts were poetical, and for her soul every leaf and every flower had its meaning. Could the mother of the baby have remembered the symbolical meaning when her fingers diligently worked the white silk in the form of the ivy-leaf? The same pattern was exhibited also on the white merino shoes in which the baby's feet were cased. Everything appertaining to the infant indicated that the source from which she sprang was refined and elegant. The delicate coral necklace which circled her throat, and the coral chains which looped up her short sleeves, were exquisitely delicate in their pink hue and the fineness of their workmanship. The neck and sleeves of the dress, and its hem, were edged with Valenciennes lace of unquestionable richness and value. The cap, too, which had been found upon the child, was a perfect mine for the development of Valenciennes lace. It had been removed, but the nurse had brought it to the drawing-room for exhibition to Col. Baldgrave. She had brought to his presence, also, the child's white merino cloak, padded with eider down, and lined with white silk elegantly quilted. The white silk quilt, also, in which the infant and its wardrobe had been wrapped, had been produced for his inspection, and that he might read, in the corner, the mysterious initials, *J. H. N.*

The little stranger and her wardrobe were in striking contrast with the sombre dresses of the group about her. The wet-nurse, Mrs. Campion, who held her for the colonel's inspection, was a dark-eyed, dark-haired woman of thirty, of medium height, fully and finely developed, but clad in deepest mourning. The heiress, too, was draped in black, and Mrs. Secor's shawl scarcely relieved the blackness of her own silk dress and bonnet. Mr. Secor, short, red-haired, fat, and fifty, was dressed in black, as also were the clergyman and the colonel. The little waif was like a sun-gleam in a circle of storm-clouds. As the merchant, in his curios-

ity and interest, bent over her, the bright, blue eyes dilated upon his face, and the fairy mouth uttered a faint "coo, coo" of recognition. The fearlessness of the child, and her apparent delight at sight of him, seemed to please him, for he passed his hand gently across her forehead, and said: —

"You don't seem to fear me, pretty one. Would you like to come to me?"

She evidently was too young to comprehend the "invitation" of the arms which he extended to her, and so she fell back upon her actual and limited experience for a reply, and enunciated again her faint "coo, coo." There was amity indicated by the reiteration of the infantile monosyllable, and upon this base he made another advance. He took her from the arms of the nurse, and walked up and down the drawing-room with her. She was perfectly complacent and satisfied. From inexperience in the art of balancing infantile flesh, he found that she was not sitting as gracefully or comfortably in his arms as she had been in the embrace of the nurse. Nevertheless she made no complaints; and her little head bobbed against his shoulder, or outward again into space, as if it was all the same to her whether she was balanced properly, or whether her neck snapped off in his perambulations. There was no little merriment among the spectators at the colonel's awkward attempts at nurse-playing, and Miss Delano remarked: —

"You succeed admirably, colonel, as a nurse; but she tolerates much out of the goodness of her heart. Let her head rest against your shoulder, and she will appear to better advantage. That's right; now she can look at you."

At her suggestion the merchant had contrived to drop the little head against his arm, and the child now looked up into his face, with her clear, blue, wondering eyes. In a moment after she uttered again her gentle "coo, coo." To his kind heart this brief remark went directly, and he exclaimed: —

"I like your conversational powers exceedingly. If you will never utter any harsher word through life than that I believe we can get along very well together. But, tell me, nurse, are these only company airs she is putting on? Does she never cry?"

"I can't answer for that, sir; it's not long, as you know, sir, that we've been acquainted. But I will say that a better child, and a quieter, I never saw, — at least, that's her style

to-day. She seems very fond of you, sir; she never takes her eyes off ye."

"Do you think so, nurse?" inquired the merchant, unable to conceal his exultation at this sudden display of infantile friendship, and still keeping his eyes fixed upon the wondering face of the infant.

"No doubt of it, sir. I don't believe she would go to any of these other gentlemen. Suppose you try it, sir."

"Well, we'll see about that," replied the colonel. "Here Mr. Delano, you take her. Will you go to this gentleman, little one?"

He held the child up to the clergyman, who smilingly extended his arms. The eyes of the child for a moment seemed amazed at the proposition, and with dignified reserve she remained silent. But when the Reverend Thomas Delano actually took her from the merchant, and sought to caress her, the tiny mouth pursed up into the most distressing indication of grief, and directly she commenced to cry piteously. It was evident the future young lady would not have strong predilections for the church. And so the clergyman remarked as he returned the child to the colonel. She ceased her complaints the instant she was restored to his arms, and he laughed his quick, humorous laugh, and said: —

"That was a distinguished failure, to be sure. Now suppose we try this gentleman. Here, Mr. Secor, it's your turn now."

He held the baby out to the vender of groceries. The child absolutely screamed out at the vision of red hair and fat which offered to take her. It was evident that auburn hair in its exaggerated form would not belong to her future ideal. And failure number two was emphatically noted by the group which encircled her. She returned to the colonel's embrace, and in a few seconds her sobs ceased. Her tears dried up and her blue orbs emerged from the mist of them like violets from the rain which has freshened their beauty. The colonel was in ecstasy. He exclaimed: —

"Dry goods, war, and politics are triumphant. What an eye for silks and satins, velvets and laces, poplins and grenadines, she will have! Military buttons will thrill her vision, and statesmen will enchant her. Here is a little woman that promises to be natural and sincere from her cradle. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon, but this child belongs to me

from choice, from taste, and from appreciation. Now, reverend sir, you have a duty to perform. I will adopt this little innocent, and she shall never want. She must be baptized right away, and I will call her after a very dear friend who, I believe, is now in heaven. She shall be named Florence. How do you like that name, Miss Delano?"

He turned with his quick, nervous manner to the heiress, still retaining his hold upon the infant. May Delano was his pet, the daughter of his old friend and companion, Horace Delano. By some singular magnetism, the beautiful aristocrat and the plain, impetuous, democratic merchant and politician were fast friends. They buried conflicting ideas when together, and esteemed each other highly, warmly. There is a certain affinity between honest convictions, no matter in what material guise they are separated from each other. She believed in the inherent necessity for ranks and classes. He was of a different school of thought. But they respected and loved each other for the sincerity and integrity of their respective lives. How near would be the millennial period did churches imitate the two friends, and look only at the bright side of each other's character!

As the merchant propounded his interrogatory he looked with his keen, hazel eyes at the heiress, who had drawn near to her reverend uncle at the mantel, and now stood with her arms looped affectionately through his arm held akimbo. She replied, after a minute's hesitation, and candidly, but with the same easy address and refined tone which ever characterized her: —

"I do not like the name; perhaps because it has no associations for me. I confess to a penchant for appropriate and beautiful names for everything human and natural. I could not love a lily by any other name. The sweetness and gentleness of the sound suggest to my mind slender beauty. Here is an exquisite child, with every indication of gentle birth, with rare beauty and with natural sweetness of temper, abandoned, and yet left where it is well known that Christianity has a foothold. Pardon me for my singularity; but you have appealed to my taste. To the artist or the architect, the name Florence may be suggestive of many things noble and memorable. But what has this little child to do with them? Colonel, take my advice, and call her Violet. Look at her eyes, what are they but violet of the richest, purest shade? Do you know what poets say about

the language of the violet? They say it signifies 'faithfulness.' What do you want in life but that same quality! You want something to be ever faithful to you in life, and to bloom beside your grave in watchfulness. You are alone, and God has sent this flower to you, this violet. Already its roots have taken hold in your heart. It is evident she will love you. If you want her to be faithful to you, call her Violet. She will be faithful to you in life, she will be faithful to your memory; for the chances are she will survive you. She will carry out your wishes after death. The poet says, 'The grave of all things hath its violet.' Take my advice, colonel, call her Violet, the emblem of 'faithfulness.'"

There came just the faintest flush of enthusiasm into her fair cheek as she warmed with her subject, and the merchant thought he had never seen her quite so beautiful before. She ceased, and looked inquiringly at him for the effect of her appeal. He looked undecided for a moment until Mrs. Secor expressed her emphatic endorsement of Miss Delano's suggestion.

"I agree with Miss Delano," she said. "Why not call children by beautiful names when there are so many at command? If I had children I would name them either from the flowers of the field, or the beautiful names of the Scriptures."

"There are jaw-breaking names enough in the Bible, Heaven knows," replied the colonel, tartly. "But what do you say, sir?" he inquired, turning to the clergyman, but still keeping his look fixed upon the infant.

The Reverend Thomas Delano smiled, as he said, gently, "I confess to a fancy for the ancient custom of naming children after the saints. Baptized children are the property of the church, and I believe in starting them in life with some holy name which properly designates them as being of the fold of the one Shepherd."

The merchant shook his head doubtfully. This last suggestion did not find much favor. After a few minutes' reflection he interrupted the conversation, which had become general, by the sudden remark, "I incline favorably to the name Violet, and upon reflection I will decide and *do* decide that she shall be baptized Violet."

He had given in as he had done a thousand times before to the influence of his pet friend, May. He rather liked

to be ruled by her, or as he would have expressed it "guided."

After some further consultation regarding the infant, — during which the colonel secured the services of Mrs. Campion to reside with him, and take care of little Violet, — it was decided that, in a few days, the baptism should take place privately in the church, under the supervision of the Reverend Thomas Delano, and that the clergyman's niece should stand as godmother of the child, and a brother of the merchant as godfather. Finally Mr. Secor and his wife took leave, and the merchant followed them, after assigning an hour when it would be convenient for the nurse to bring the child to its new home. He declared that it was essential that his house-keeper should be apprised of the advent of the little adopted one, as she would be very apt otherwise to be sensational in her conduct. It was necessary to prepare her mind for this startling event, and to mollify her in advance. She was faithful and efficient, but gifted with prejudices and whims. And so the party in the drawing-room broke up.

When the nurse had withdrawn with her charge, May Delano approached her uncle, who was standing before the window, and looking thoughtfully out into the avenue, and laying her hand softly upon his arm, said: —

"I want a moment's confidence with you, dear uncle; or, rather, I want to solicit your pardon for an indiscretion."

There was little of humility in her tone, to indicate that she felt great consciousness of guilt. That vague quality of the penitent, humility, was a rare development in the character of the Delano family. Still there was something of uneasiness in her voice and manner which attracted his instant attention, for he turned quickly, and looked earnestly at her. Then, laying his hand affectionately upon her shoulder, he said, pleasantly: —

"That must be a novel position for you, May, — soliciting pardon. You are so wonderfully discreet generally. I am not sure that I would not like you better if you had sins like ordinary people, — that is, weaknesses. I would feel more as if you were a companion for a sinner like me. You are too good, niece; but I am afraid you are brooding too much over the loss of your father. It is not well, I assure you. Let your heart cling to new idols. Go out more, and read less. Bring some pleasant companion into the house, and

— well! I can't say, be more cheerful; for you are the impersonation of cheerfulness. But be younger, — more interested in the world. You are qualified for immense usefulness, if you will but assimilate yourself more to the thoughts and interests of society. God has designed you for the world; therefore, serve him in the world. Do you understand me in the spiritual sense?"

"Perfectly," was the calm response. "But that was not the subject upon which I came to talk. I have done wrong; perhaps I have, — it is a vague idea I have of my offence. Still, I am uneasy. I have been spying out the secrets of your oratory."

"And is that all?" was the response. "Do you conceive me to be a Bluebeard, who locks up mysteries that the only child of my brother may be entrapped into ruin by her curiosity? Why, May, I haven't a secret in my house from you. You may roam up and down it at will, read my books, open my drawers, and read my letters, too, if you like. I have so much faith in your discretion that I never would think of keeping anything from you that could be of the least interest to you. I was jesting, merely, when I spoke of my sanctum sanctorum. Several of my parishioners visit that oratory frequently; and how could I think of admitting them, and excluding my own niece? Nonsense! 'Perfect love casteth out fear.' I have none now to love but you. You are welcome to every part of my house, — no reservation in that welcome."

"Dear uncle," was the earnest reply, "I feel relieved, perfectly relieved. But, tell me, are you authorized by the regulations of the church to employ a confessional? Do you really hear confessions, and pronounce absolution?"

"Why not, May? A few, not many, come to me burdened with the consciousness of sin. They feel that they require counsel from one whom they believe to be the agent of God. To them it is a relief to think they are literally conforming to the direction of Scripture, to confess their sins one to another. They would shrink from uttering in the church, in the public and general confession of sin which all the congregation make every Sunday in a loud tone that every one might hear, the secret sins which would doom them to the contempt or reproach of their neighbors. Flesh and blood are not equal to a public confession of individual sins. Therefore, when such weary, heavy-laden ones

come to me, I listen to them, encourage them, direct and counsel them. If they are penitent, I forgive them in the name of God. 'Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'"

"But, uncle, is it not detrimental to good order and uniformity, that one clergyman should introduce customs and observances which another will not, no matter how innocent those departures from the established forms may be?"

"May," responded her uncle, "leaving out of the argument whatever may be pertinent to public observances, what harm can there be in affording relief to anxious souls, in that quiet, unobtrusive way which can occasion no one any scandal who is not concerned, and which yet is a consolation and a comfort to those over-sensitive, troubled consciences, which need something more than generalization and publicity in the confession and absolution of sin? We *can* pronounce absolution *in* the church. Can we not pronounce it privately, quietly, if thereby some souls may be assisted and saved?"

She stood beside him, thoughtful and silent. After a long pause she said, "I do not see why you cannot, in accordance with the laws of logic. I must think of it further." She turned from him, and swept slowly out of the room.

Chapter VI.

He with the Magi turned the hallowed page
Of Zoroaster; then his towering soul
High on the plumes of contemplation soared,
And from the lofty Babylonian fane
With learned Chaldeans traced the mystic sphere.

GLOVER.

On the following day May Delano stood in the hall of Mrs. Secor's residence, awaiting with much curiosity the opening of the door which would afford ingress to the apartments reserved for the future use of Montrose Earle. She had thrown over her mourning dress a black velvet cloak, and her glistening chestnut hair was partially hidden by a

black bonnet. One slender hand, cased in an accurately fitting black kid glove, rested upon the oaken banister of the principal staircase of the dwelling. The hall of the mansion was spacious, and oaken doors opened into apartments on either side. The house had evidently been built many years; probably at a period when real estate was not extravagantly high, and when economy of space in building had not been the principal care in planning the structure. The antiquity of the edifice was further suggested by the dark shade which the solid oak doors and the banisters had assumed, and also by the old-fashioned carving on the tops and sides of the door-frames. Miss Delano had time to note particularly these peculiarities as she stood silently awaiting Mrs. Secor's movements. The latter lady had conducted her visitor up the stairs to the hall in the second story, but experienced some difficulty in finding among the bunch of keys which she carried with her the right one to admit them to the private apartments. After several failures she succeeded in fitting the proper key to its place, and, with an exclamation of satisfaction at her final success, she gave it a quick turn and flung open the door. The apartment into which they entered was quite dark; at least it appeared so to the young lady, who had just come from the bright sunlight of the avenue. But in a few seconds Mrs. Secor had raised the windows and opened all the shutters of the entire suite of rooms, and Miss Delano was amazed to find herself standing in one of the most luxurious apartments she had ever seen. Notwithstanding the fearful excitements of the night of her former visit, she had appreciated to a certain extent the richness and beauty of this singular individual's sanctum. But then the search had been hurried and horrified by the possibility of meeting at every turn the traces or evidences of crime. The scene was changed, and she had ample leisure to study the details of the rooms, and appreciate the exquisite beauty of the works of art which surrounded her on every side.

She was in the front room of the suite. It looked out upon the avenue. She felt beneath her feet the undulations of the softest tapestry carpet she had ever seen. It muffled every sound of her feet as she passed over it. Its figures were wrought in salmon color and blue, relieved by intervals of white lilies. Fairy creatures in robes of blue appeared to waltz upon a plain of salmon color, and clusters of long

white lilies parted the whirling couples. The walls were covered with satin paper in broad, alternate bands of salmon color and white. The heavy curtains which shaded the two windows looking upon the avenue were salmon-colored silk, elaborately figured, and beneath their parted edges appeared the under curtains of white lace, wonderful in fineness of texture and grace of pattern. The ceiling of the room was frescoed with classical figures. Ceres, in robe of blue, grasped her sheaf of golden wheat; Bacchus, crowned with grape-leaves, bore aloft his wine-cup and led his merry followers; Io, beloved of Jupiter, but changed into a white heifer, was pursued by Juno's tormenting gadfly; and Psyche, the marvel of beauty, was delineated there in the act of waking from her supernatural sleep, touched by the arrow of her beloved Cupid. The snow-white marble of the mantel-piece was a masterpiece of art and beauty carved in Italy, representing in relievo the creation, temptation, sin, and exile of Adam and Eve. In the four corners of the room stood on pedestals of glistening yellow marble white statues of the four angels to whom are assigned the custody of mortals in the several periods of infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. One was bending as in ecstasy above a cradle; one was shielding a youth with her wings, and smilingly pointing forward; one was standing with folded wings and silently praying, with clasped hands, for the strong man, who seemed to walk alone, proud in the consciousness of will; and the other was calmly, serenely pointing an aged man to heaven.

Above the mantel-piece was a large painting of Atalanta, daughter of Iasus, contending in the race with the suitors who sought her hand, and fatally betrayed by the three golden apples. The contest was spirited, and the elegance of this most swift-footed of mortals portrayed with a master's power in every curve of her fair limbs and the onward intensity of her expression. Against the walls were placed several luxurious divans, covered with blue and salmon-colored silk. Two or three chairs, similarly covered, and having in their backs gilt medallions representing scenes from the Grecian classics, were scattered about the apartment. Etagères were on either side of the mantel-piece, made of variegated yellow and white marble. They were filled with statuettes and miniature bronzes of ancient poets, warriors, philosophers, public monuments, temples, vestal virgins of the pagan epoch, and prophets of the Jewish dis-

pensation. Each figure was exquisitely carved or wrought and they all had evidently been the accumulation of many travels, and the selection of a refined and classical taste. The paintings, large and small, which adorned the walls, had been collected, unquestionably, by the same cultivated and discriminating hand. There were battle-scenes from the Iliad; and from the same great epic, artists had painted domestic life and the affections in scenes breathing the greatest tenderness and beauty. There were portrayed, also, upon the canvas quiet pictures from the Odyssey, with an occasional effort at the delineation of the grandeur and sublimity of its finer passages. There were occasional niches in the walls, the receptacles of some exquisite gems of statuary. In one of them appeared the forsaken Ariadne wedded to Bacchus, who was presenting her with that wedding-crown which at her death he transferred to the stars. In another niche was Mercury, the youthful god and musician, with his tortoise-shell lyre, and Apollo in the act of presenting to him his golden staff and the gift of prophecy, in delighted acknowledgment of his musical talent. Every scene in marble or on canvas was chaste, classical, and elegant. There were tables inlaid with polished marbles of every hue, and on some of them were valuable works from the authors of antiquity, bound in vellum and velvet. On one table was a writing-desk of ivory, inlaid with silver, lined with purple velvet, and partitioned off with solid silver divisions. Upon one delicate-looking side-table of yellow marble rested an ivory miniature-case tipped with silver. Upon opening it a likeness painted on ivory was revealed. May Delano's gaze was riveted to that face instantly. It was a lady in mature life, seated between two boys very youthful in appearance, and whom Mrs. Secor pronounced immediately to be Montrose Earle and the disinherited younger brother, Constant.

"Why, did you not tell me," exclaimed the heiress, after a brief inspection of the miniature, "that the baby resembled the younger brother, instead of Montrose Earle? Why! see here; the eyes of the three are very much alike to be sure. But look at that mouth of the younger brother and the delicate outline of his face. The baby is the perfect picture of *him*. There is a general family resemblance; but look at that finer, poetical development in the countenance of the younger boy. The mother and the brother look rather like caricatures of that beautiful young face.

How lovely he is! How graceful! Have you ever seen him, Mrs. Secor! He must be beautiful in his manhood as Adonis."

"No; I do not recollect that I ever met the younger brother," was Mrs. Secor's reply. "It is only the fact of Montrose Earle being our landlord that has brought us in contact with even him. But really you are right: this young Constant Earle is the very image of the baby. How strange that I should not have thought of this picture before! Yes,—you are right; neither the mother nor Montrose have such a mouth or lower face."

"And you say, this Constant, this beautiful boy, is a man and starving, struggling?" continued the heiress.

"Yes, Miss Delano; that is the current report. Hard case,—is it not?"

"I should think so," was the response. "But where does he live?—in this city?"

"That is beyond my power to tell you. I think I have heard that he lives in some hovel in this city. But I do not feel confident about that. But come into this middle room. This is to be the library."

So speaking, Mrs. Secor pushed aside the broad curtain of salmon-colored silk, which, pendant from two white marble Corinthian columns, divided the two rooms, and held it back for her guest to pass under.

May reluctantly laid aside the miniature and entered the middle room of the suite. She was intensely interested in the picture of the boy, Constant Earle. At that early age he must have been a marvel of loveliness. He must have resembled decidedly the Christ scourged at the pillar. All curiosity to look upon the countenance of the elder brother had passed away. She only cared to see him now as a man of exquisite taste, who had arranged this sanctum, and who presented in his character the strange combination of refinement and brutality. But to look upon the face of that beautiful younger brother,—now moulded and perfected in manhood, now bearing in his eyes the gleam of intellectual development,—that would indeed be a gratification. Could he really be suffering? Could by any possibility his beautiful face bear the marks of intense anguish, as did the features of the ideal Christ? Could she help him? Could a secret gift from her hand relieve him, encourage him, remove the agony of the present cross, and bring to that exquisite

face and those deep blue eyes, hope, peace, a smile? She was asking these questions of herself, as she turned away from the miniature and followed with her imperial grace and gentle footfall the short, nervous, little woman, who was her guide.

The middle apartment was arranged for the reception of an extensive library. A large portion of the books had already been deposited upon the shelves. But many spaces in the ebony and silver bookcases were still vacant. One side of the room was devoted to the purposes of a museum. Cabinets of ebony and silver, constructed like the bookcases in the Egyptian style of architecture, and elaborately carved in hieroglyphics, were filled with curiosities and relics from every land and age. The museum was particularly rich in specimens of weapons of war used by the civilized and barbarous warriors of every nation. Sabres, lances, cimeters, war-clubs, pistols, rifles, bows, arrows, and shields, of the finest material and most elaborate workmanship, were arranged with perfect taste on every side, and many of them were elegantly mounted in silver, gold, or precious stones. The labels upon some of the more valuable ones indicated that they were presents from chiefs and men of eminence in their respective lands. The collector of the museum had evidently led an adventurous and roving life.

The library was lighted entirely from above. A large skylight flung upon the backs of the volumes, selected with a scholar's discrimination and an antiquary's love of rare tomes, and upon the glistening steel and silver and jewels of the weapons, a broad glare of light which could be modified in an instant by a cord attached to shifting curtains of white, arranged to slide horizontally across the panes of glass above. In the centre of the apartment, upon a scarlet velvet carpet, stood a table, so elaborately carved from ebony and so admirably appointed for the purposes and methodical habits of a student, as to merit a minute description. It was twelve feet in length, five in width, and two and a half feet in height. In the centre of the table was a circular aperture for the seat of the student. Upon hinges, near the centre of the table, at the sides, parts of the wood opened outward, affording the scholar opportunity to seat himself, and then return the movable parts to their places, thus enabling him to surround himself entirely with manuscripts and open books of reference, which he could consult without

leaving his seat. The rim of this circular aperture was a series of small drawers for the deposit of papers and stationery of every description. The inkstands of glass encased in solid silver were sunk into the table, and just low enough below its surface to enable ebony covers to protect them when not in use, and thus restore the smooth and uniform surface of the table. The entire sides of the table were full of drawers for the preservation of manuscripts and documents, and these drawers were so accurately fitted as to be invisible to a stranger at first sight, who would only learn of their existence by seeing a carved ebony head of some well-known scholar, of ancient or modern times, drawn gradually out from the intricate carving of the table, bearing with it the drawer. Before and behind any student in his seat stood two lamps of solid silver, massive, and movable by concealed rollers. One was the image of Solomon, erect in his robes of state, and bearing aloft the lamp whose ground-glass shade bore the inscription "Ancient Wisdom." The other was the heroic figure of a Christian martyr, bound to the stake and holding the lamp which presented this motto: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The tops of the bookcases and cabinets were ornamented by the marble busts of scholars and poets, and above them all against the walls, which were hung with scarlet velvet, appeared the choicest paintings of the modern Italian, Spanish, and German schools. But above the triumphal arch of black marble and silver carvings, which was supported upon glistening black marble columns, in the Eygptian style, and which sustained the scarlet velvet curtains, opening into the third apartment of the suite, appeared a portrait so exquisitely beautiful that May Delano exclaimed with delight, and Mrs. Secor with amazement, at the apparition. Neither could question the fact that here, prominent in the sanctum of the elder brother, was the likeness of that beautiful being, Constant Earle, of the miniature, portrayed in all the loveliness, the fire, and the poetry of young manhood. It must have been taken just as this young prince of beauty stood upon the line which divides a score and four from a quarter of a century. The rich, glorious, celestial blue of the eye seemed to move and dilate upon them as they gazed. The small mouth was half curved in a smile, and the fresh, earnest, eager flush of enjoyment and hope was upon the

cheek. Faith in man and woman, in truth and purity and God, had not yet gone down before the charge of the infernal legions, allied with the world. The upper lip was slightly hidden by a light-brown mustache, whose long, slim ends curled upward. The flush of the cheek was in striking contrast with the marble whiteness of the broad, poetic, perfect forehead, from which was carelessly pressed back the curly, misty brown hair. The eyes were eloquent in the clearness of intensity and honesty. Intellect, love, gentleness, sympathy, were unmistakably in them. About the delicate lips lingered the tenderness, the refinement, and the purity of a woman. The portrait was taken to the waist, and the coat was of a dark-brown hue, carelessly buttoned so as to reveal on the breast a large part of the ruffled shirt-bosom. The shirt-collar was broad and rolling, and encircled by a black silk cravat, with flowing ends. It was the face, the figure, and the ideal of a poet, whose erratic life some proud mother's prayers might have entwined, or some girl's fond, appreciative heart have worshipped. There had been no serious cares as yet to contract those matchless eyes or trace the early wrinkles upon the noble forehead. Success, wealth, friends, had ever attended him. Hunger, the wolf of poverty's winter, had never visited his door. He was courted, beloved, flattered, by the world, and in its heaven there had been no cloud for him. Where was he now? Alas! the lion-hearted, the proud, the beautiful, the gentle, was starving, clutching for bread in his fierce grapple with poverty. Hunger, weariness, anxiety, despair, were trampling out the ideal life within him. He was making terrible atonement for the past luxury of his career. Was there no hope for him yet? Must that lovely face forever follow the doom of the destitute and the low? Such were the mental interrogatories the heiress put to herself, as she dropped into a chair and studied the portrait, while Mrs. Secor indulged in repeated exclamations of amazement at the fact that a portrait had escaped her daily observations; that a gem of art had found its way into this library, of which she alone held the keys, and yet she had known nothing of it. Every workman, every upholsterer, every artist, who had entered these rooms for purposes of decoration, had passed under her immediate eye. She held the keys, and all were admitted to the rooms by her hand. Even Montrose Earle, in his occasional visits to superintend the

carrying out of his orders, used no keys except those in her possession. How had the portrait found its way into her house? How had it entered the library, and found a resting-place above the arch? Three days ago it was not there. Within those three days no one had entered this suite of rooms, except the party who entered them hurriedly and in alarm on the night of the mysterious murder-cry. Here was an event in the house-keeping experience of this little woman which set at defiance all her sense of propriety, of privacy, of sanctity in the conduct of affairs beneath her roof. Montrose Earle had not visited her for many days, and no agent of his had solicited admittance to the library within he past three days. She had herself recently visited the rooms, and no portrait of Constant Earle was there, for she had examined the empty space above the arch, and wondered for what purpose it was being reserved. Who had secretly invaded her home? How could the feat have been accomplished? The more she speculated upon the affair, the more mysterious did the apparition of the portrait appear. She detailed to Miss Delano all the facts connected with her recent visits to the rooms; she expressed her wonder, her terror, at this second mystery, following so closely upon the cry of murder, the finding of the revolver, and the abandonment of the infant by the stranger who had been secretly admitted at her front door. Under the stimulus of her amazement, she excited the heiress to a search with her for any unknown or secret entrance to this suite of rooms. They pried into every nook and corner and case and cabinet for secret doors and secret springs. Their search was unavailing. Everything was in perfect order. Elegance and propriety reigned in the two rooms. There was nothing to indicate hidden ways, nothing to evoke suspicion that Montrose Earle was anything but the elegant, retiring respectable gentleman that he seemed. Then the two pursued their search in the third room of the suite.

Chapter VII.

To note the chamber: — I will write all down:
Such, and such, pictures; there the window: such
Th' adornment of her bed; the arras, figures,
Why, such, and such.

CYMBELINE.

MRS. SECOR drew aside the scarlet velvet curtain beneath the portrait of Constant Earle, and then pushed back the white velvet curtain which hung just beyond it. May Delano followed her, and immediately found herself in a bedchamber of white and silver. The walls were hung with folds of white silk; the carpet was a fabric she had never seen, and appeared to be a ground of some material resembling white velvet having poppies worked in it with silver thread. The window-curtains were of white velvet with a slender vine and leaves worked in silver thread along their edges. They were drawn back revealing lace under-curtains. Their cornices were broad bands of silver elaborately carved in relievo, as was also the cornice of the grand curtain which partitioned the bedchamber from the library. The furniture of the apartment was of white marble, delicately carved in fruits and flowers; the bureau drawers having silver lilies for handles, and the chairs silver bands around the white velvet seats. The mantel-piece was an elaborate work of art. Two white marble angels held a screen of marble behind a grate which was encased in a perfect globe of silver when not in actual use, the detached half of the ball or cover fitting to the back accurately, and kept always polished to dazzling brightness.

The bedstead was a broad couch of white marble, having upon the short posts full-length statues of Somnus, the youthful god of sleep, holding an inverted torch, Nox, the goddess of night, winged and covered with a star-spangled robe, her daughter Nemesis (the emblem of conscience, standing as a virgin in a thoughtful mood, and holding in her left hand a branch of the ash-tree, and in her right a wheel and sword), and a statue representing her other child, Dreams. From a hand of each of these four statues rose to a silver ring in the

ceiling a misty bed canopy of white silk with edgings of lace. It was a luxurious couch, the fine pillow-cases trimmed with lace, and the coverlet of soft white silk embroidered heavily in silver leaves and flowers. Several paintings framed in silver adorned the walls, but every scene was a gentle moonlight view, or a glimpse of winter scenery, or some representation recalling to mind, and harmonizing with, the prevailing colors of the apartment, silver and white. The effect of all the appointments of the room was a suggestion of peace and purity. The vases upon the mantle, the silver toilet bottles and boxes upon the bureau, the silver brushes and combs, the statuettes, the jewel-cases of ivory, and the weblike delicacy of the silver chandelier, all quietly fulfilled their mission of serving the reign and wearing the livery of the presiding genii of the place, silver and white.

Upon the bureau were two statuettes, of alabaster, miniature copies of Michael Angelo's exquisite statues, Day and Night. Upon the mantel-piece were alabaster copies of his more perfect and ideal creations, Evening and Morning. To the latter figure, "L'Aurora di Michel Angelo," the appreciative eye of Miss Delano was instantly attracted. It was a female outstretched upon a sarcophagus, and devoid of drapery, save only a veil drawn over her hair. The face was full of spiritual beauty, and her attitude that of one preparing to rise. One arm was raised, with the elbow sharply bent, as the hand grasped the folds of the veil to draw it over her eyes against the intensity of the rising sun. The heiress lingered long in study of this exquisite beauty, deemed the finest of Michael Angelo's efforts as a sculptor. She was called away from the contemplation of it by Mrs. Secor's repeated exclamations of admiration and delight at the perfection and elegance of the closets designed for wardrobes, and at the purity and richness of the white marble bathing-tub, with its silver swan upholding in its bill the reservoir for the shower, and at the silver faucets fashioned in the form of dolphins. Every article in the apartment indicated solidity and richness, secured at the most lavish expenditure and by the most careful and fastidious search.

"It is a suitable bridal chamber for a prince instead of the selfish resting-place of a bachelor," exclaimed Miss Delano; "and to think that all this taste and luxury have fallen to the lot of a cold-hearted elder brother, when that proud, beautiful Constant chafes away his life and loveliness in some garret.

The ways of Heaven are indeed inscrutable, Mrs. Secor; but I wonder if this younger brother has talent, is worthy of sympathy, is an upright, earnest man. I find that many in this city, who are born under the auspices of wealth and station, prove themselves to be ingrates to Providence, and fritter away their advantages and talents in the worst dissipations. But I would like to know about this unfortunate gentleman. You need never mention this matter, but I think, Mrs. Secor, that God demands of us greater charity and interference when he has given us large means. I have a large property, — very large, — and I know of no better way of disposing of a part of my income than encouraging the struggling in every condition of life. If you happen to learn from Montrose Earle, or from any one else, the whereabouts of this younger brother, do not fail to inform me. I have to move silently and secretly in these matters, where one has to contend with pride of birth and individuality. If this young man is really suffering I will assist him, and he shall never know from what hand the assistance comes. — But look at this lace on the pillow-cases and the curtains; why, the man must be a perfect Wallenstein in wealth and luxurious taste. And so he is coming here to live entirely alone by himself! What a strange nature to isolate himself even from his own flesh and blood! Is he agreeable, Mrs. Secor, in his address?"

"Indeed he is, Miss Delano; he is a perfect gentleman. He is a little reserved at times; particularly when any one refers to his family. He seems to consider that matter an impertinence. I never tried it but once, and then he shut me up very decidedly. 'I don't care to discuss my relatives,' he said, and then turned away from me. I never tried him on that matter again. With that exception he has generally seemed cheerful. But you are very kind about offering assistance to the brother. If I find out anything about him I will surely let you know. But this portrait — this portrait — how in the name of goodness did it get in here without my knowing it? I would have seen it come in. There is not the slightest doubt about that."

"The cry of murder is still more mysterious to me. Mrs. Secor, I heard it distinctly. It sounded as if it came from that front room, — the salmon and blue room. I was wide awake and on the alert for the sound of my uncle's step. There is something here which we have not fathomed yet;

there is some secret way of escape. Could not the murderer have escaped from one of these back windows?"

"Mercy, no! Miss Delano," replied the little woman. "It is too high; come here."

She moved quickly to one of the windows, pushed aside the curtains, and pointed downward to the yard of the house. It would have required hardihood indeed to leap from that window on to the bricks below, a distance of two stories, by including the height of the basement wall. No ankles would be apt to come off triumphant from that feat. And even could that leap be counted among the list of possibilities in speculating upon the murderer's escape, who had given him access to the second story, and what had he done with his victim? Who was the murderer, the man who abandoned the child and entered the house, or the individual who met him in the second story?

These questions were repeated and speculated upon by the two females, as they stood by the window in that luxurious bedchamber. They had searched in every corner and every closet of that suite of rooms for the secret avenue of escape of that mysterious felon. Everything was as calm, as peaceful, as serene, as a dream. The sunlight flooded the apartment, dancing upon the rich figures of the curtains, flashing from the silver articles of the toilet and the silver patterns on the hangings, and wandering in avenues of light among the limbs and wings of the angels. It seemed impossible to associate deeds of violence and death with the serene, unruffled elegance of the place. Nevertheless, as the two stood silently, at length, in the white chamber, gazing into each other's eyes, a vague sense of terror stole over them; a consciousness came to them that a fearful crime had been successfully concealed, and that where their footsteps had been so innocently falling upon the carpets, the tread of the avenger had passed, and left no trace. Had it been a deed of just retribution, or had it been a bold defiance of the immutable law of God and man? Would it belong to that class of mysteries whose unravelling the Eternal reserves for that awful day when the dead are summoned to the last judgment, or had the guilty being left one of those slender links behind him which, in the providence of God, couple together in time the broken chains of evidence, and bind the flying wretch to the terrors of the outraged human law?

Seating themselves, after a time, in the white chamber,

they discussed the mysterious event in low tones, as if they feared at any moment the approach of the hidden murderer, whose place of concealment they apprehended might open from the very walls of the house itself. Mrs. Secor communicated in that interview every fact and every rumor that had come to her regarding the Earle family. She detailed everything connected with the singular will which her acquaintances had heard, for she was herself only acquainted with Montrose Earle. The disinherison of the children by a wealthy father becomes, even in the crowded and busy metropolis, the subject of popular comment. It is so manifestly unnatural for a parent to cast his own flesh and blood beggars upon the world, that the good sense of society is shocked. No matter how erring, how depraved, how disobedient, the offspring may be, the dictates of the human heart and the dictates of religion point to gentleness, to forbearance, to kindness in the treatment of the children whom God has given to a father in goodness and mercy. For a child there should be no day at which reverence and respect may cease; and for a parent the obligation of protection and love is equally durable and binding; and the good sense of every Christian community revolts at the violation of duty by either. When, therefore, the head of the Earle family laid himself down to die, and in the death-struggle persisted in ignoring his younger children; when he looked in the face of the death-angel, who had summoned him to the bar of a just but merciful God, and sternly refused to remember the delicately nurtured offspring whom he had brought into a hard, selfish, struggling world, whose successful career of self-reliance and labor he had rendered almost impracticable by educating and habituating them to luxury, — a thrill of horror ran through every gentle and true heart, and men could not reconcile themselves to the belief that such dereliction of mercy could be rewarded with divine mercy in the world to come. Hence the rumor of this strange obduracy travelled wide; and when investigation and inquiry confirmed the fact that Constant Earle and his sister had indulged in extravagance and dissipation to no greater extent than the majority of young ladies and young gentlemen in their own position in society in the metropolis, a vague feeling of wonder and of horror became prevalent at the cruelty and neglect of the deceased Earle. But when the succeeding mystery was reported to the world, that the fortunate elder

brother had bound himself up in an impenetrable armor of reserve, and had refused to share one dollar with his destitute relatives, society was annoyed and scandalized. It was rumored that he must have obtained the entire wealth of his father by undue influence, or by forgery. Neither of these charges could be sustained upon legal investigation; and it appeared, moreover, to be a very hard case if a man's antecedents could not be cited in his favor. Montrose Earle had not been a hard, stern, bad man in the memory of his cotemporaries. He was known to have been a traveller of wide and varied experiences. Rumor named him a scholar and an art critic. He had ever manifested the tastes, instincts, and proprieties of the gentleman. He had many friends in society, and the number of those who respected him simply was by no means small. These favorable considerations in his behalf rendered the singularity of his present conduct the more mysterious and unaccountable. Society fancied Constant Earle and his sister; why should not their own brother fancy them too? Why not, at least, put bread into their mouths, and clothing upon their backs, and kind words into their ears? This outlay could not perceptibly deplete his vast resources, and it would most assuredly be a sop thrown to decency.

When May Delano had become possessed of all the gossip relating to the Earle family which it was in the power of the grocer's wife to communicate, she arose to take her departure. At that instant she happened to glance into a long mirror, framed in silver, which reached nearly to the carpet. She saw the reflection in the glass, of the white carpet, and a part also of the marble couch. Near the side of the latter, and partly under it, she discovered a tiny white-looking object lying upon the floor. She turned away from the mirror, and found that it had reflected correctly what appeared to be a note or fragment of paper. She called Mrs. Secor's attention to it as she passed across the room to pick it up. It proved to be a small note, open and crumpled up, as if it had been crushed in a hand and thrown carelessly upon the floor. As she raised it from the carpet, she uttered an exclamation of surprise. It was signed *J. H. N.* It was impossible to avoid seeing this signature, as the bottom of the note was turned up so as to meet the eye of any one who might raise it from the floor. It was not within the power of human nature to resist the impulse to smooth out

that note and learn its contents. The inviolability of a private letter was forgotten. She, who under ordinary circumstances would have shrunk with horror from the bare intimation that she was capable of reading another's private missive, was so intensely absorbed in the mystery of the murder, and the infant, that she hurriedly spread out the note, and made herself acquainted with its contents. Mrs. Secor, standing on tiptoe behind her, read with her, as follows: —

"DEAR MONTROSE: — Your note has just been handed to me. I will endeavor to meet you at the hour you mention. It strikes me that your business must be very urgent indeed to take you from the city at such a strange time. Nevertheless, friendship such as ours has been demands sacrifices; consequently I will come at midnight, although I have a very pressing matter to attend to, which I shall have to expedite in order to meet you. If I am a few moments behind time, do not be impatient, for I will certainly be there. I will accept your offer of a bed for the night, as I do not care to return home at that late hour, particularly if such frightful weather as this continues. My dear fellow, I am straining a point to oblige you, all of which please note, and credit it to the desire of gratifying you, which ever pervades the heart of your friend J. H. N."

May Delano turned with a bewildered look to the little woman at her shoulder. Her companion, pale with terror, exclaimed: —

"Our worst suspicions are confirmed, and to think how cool a deed it was too: to inveigle his own friend here at midnight, and then murder him in cold blood. What *shall* we do! — what *shall* we do!"

"Nonsense!" was the unruffled response. "Mrs. Secor, it is not customary for people to murder their friends. But who among Mr. Earle's acquaintances answers to those initials, J. H. N.?

"I am sure I cannot tell you, Miss Delano. But there can be no difficulty about that. Any of his intimate acquaintances will know who *J. H. N.* is. But oh! how dreadful that such a thing could happen under my roof; and it will bring us all into such dreadful notoriety too. O mercy, let us get out of these rooms as quick as we can!"

"Wait," was the firm response, which, coming from one of her character and presence, conveyed a command. She laid her gloved hand upon the arm of the frightened woman to detain her. Mrs. Secor glanced up at those clear, proud, imperial eyes. Her agitation was sufficiently quelled by that dictatorial monosyllable to enable her to see that the heiress was not accustomed to have her demands disputed. The voice was wonderfully calm as it continued: —

"Neither you nor I must leave these rooms till we have arranged a programme for the future. Notoriety is not an honor that I covet, and it can scarcely benefit you either, Mrs. Secor. We will not conceal crime, I am sure. Neither will we raise a hue-and-cry about trifles. This note has really cleared up nothing. It has no date, and it is uncertain by whom it was written. At the best it is a friend's letter, and men are not apt to make way with their friends clandestinely. Permit me to suggest to you, that any noise raised about this matter yet may defeat the ends of justice."

"But," exclaimed the nervous little woman, "I can't keep still; I should burst, I know I should. I must tell Mr. Secor; I never keep anything from him."

"Unquestionably you should," was the reply. "But listen to me; that is exactly what I was about to suggest. Let us confide this matter for the present to two only. You tell your husband and I will inform my uncle. You will see that they will both sustain me in my position, that this matter will be best ferreted out by employing caution and time. Let us wait and watch. I have no question that a crime has been committed. I must believe my own ears to a certain extent. Now listen to me. If Mr. Earle has been the guilty party, he should not be allowed to escape through our foolishness. If he is guilty and is punished, that poor brother and sister may obtain his property, for he is a bachelor."

"Not if he has made a will, Miss Delano," replied the little woman, her practical turn of mind being recalled to her by the coolness of the girl before her. She was amazed at the sense displayed by one so much her junior in years.

"He has made no will, Mrs. Secor; that is to say, I do not believe he has. I have not enjoyed a wonderfully long experience of men, but let me tell you that men who inherit large fortunes in early life, and a few months after their

property comes to them commence such a career of extravagance as you see around you in these rooms, are the last men generally to think of doing so wise and provident an act as drawing up a will immediately. There comes a large hole in the estate before they commence providing for posterity. This is the general rule. But never mind all this. I do not know the law, but it occurred to me that this poor brother and sister might possibly be benefited. Now, if this man proves to be innocent, how absurd we should all make ourselves by raising an unnecessary storm against him! Do you not think so?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Delano. But how on earth are such things to be found out unless people *do* raise a storm about it?"

"By submitting the facts to wiser and more experienced heads than our own," replied the same calm, imperturbable voice.

"You mean the authorities, I suppose, Miss Delano?"

"Not necessarily, Mrs. Secor. The authorities of this city are not always wiser and more profound heads than our own. At least I have heard so. But this is what I mean. For instance, my uncle has been thoroughly educated in the law. I have heard leading men of the courts remark that his legal judgment was excellent. Let us ask him what is best to be done with this note. Call in your husband to the consultation. His house is involved in this matter. Talk to no one until you learn his opinion. Prudence can harm no one; it may subserve the cause of right. Be guided, I pray you, by my advice in this instance. Don't talk about this note generally to people."

"I think you are right, Miss Delano; but I shall watch closely this man's movements. He must have some means of entering these rooms which I am ignorant of. How came the portrait here? Just to think of it. Such a kind, elegant gentleman too. He has charmed my husband and myself by his generosity and accommodating disposition. We never asked him to make repairs, or make any improvements in this house, but he listened pleasantly to us, and has spent a good deal of money on the place, just to accommodate us. That is the reason we gave up this part of the house to him. He acts queerly about his brother and sister, to be sure; I hope he hasn't done anything wrong here. I will watch him closely though, — shall I not?"

"Unquestionably," was the response. "But never for one instant allow him to know that you suspect him. When is he coming to occupy these rooms?"

"About the first week in May, I believe; at least the upholsterer told me so. He was coming earlier, I understood him, but the upholsterer says he was instructed not to leave anything undone after the first of May. I would like to know what your uncle says about the note. Will you let me know soon?"

"Yes. You bring your husband over to uncle's house to-night, and we will talk it all over. But, for Heaven's sake, be careful and not talk to any one else. If this man is guilty it may put him on his guard. But, really, I do not see anything yet to fasten a crime upon Mr. Earle. Shall I keep this paper?"

"Certainly, Miss Delano, if you like. We will have it read aloud to the gentlemen to-night."

"Very well, I will bid you good-morning, and allow me to express my gratitude to you for your kind gratification of my curiosity. These rooms are truly regal."

The two passed under the white velvet curtain, and made their way out to the hall as they had come, May Delano examining minutely again the rare elegancies of the suite as they passed.

Chapter VIII.

Arrayed — a half-angelic sight —
In vests of pure baptismal white,
The mother to the font doth bring
The little helpless, nameless thing.

CHARLES LAMB.

THE midday sun flooded the grand avenue of the metropolis. The rays flashed from the wheels of the elegant equipages, and glistened on the smooth backs of the hurrying steeds, as they sped away on their missions of business or pleasure. Everybody was out enjoying or taking advantage of the genial sunshine, that had come so suddenly to relieve the tedium of the stormy winter days which so long

had detained the gentle and the delicate within doors. The snow and the sleet and the rain had passed away, leaving no trace upon the splendid avenue, save here and there in the gutters occasional miniature ice-pools, hardened by the frost of the past night. A clear, cold atmosphere held sway, as was manifested by the puffs of frozen breath which issued from the nostrils of the horses as they moved along. Nevertheless it was a stimulating, bracing air for ordinary lungs; and all seemed to enjoy its health-giving and cheek-brightening influence. The stern aristocrat leaned comfortably back in his carriage, and looked calmly, and with becoming assumption of indifference, directly ahead. The equally happy and opulent parvenu rested against the padded back of his vehicle, and, while enjoying his drive, ventured an occasional glimpse at the humanity on the sidewalks. Pedestrians were moving along the *pavé* with the true American rapidity of gait, and many of them utterly oblivious of the fact that there was no special necessity for their hurry, as they were out for pleasure and not business. But the national nervousness and energy were upon them all, and away they sped, the adult and the youth, the matron and the maid, rushing, trotting, striding along in the full glare of the genial sun. The male portion of the population, who wore the livery of the great American autocrat, "*business*," had long since disappeared in that Babel of the metropolis, familiarly known as "down-town;" but there was a sufficient representation of the lords of creation on "the avenue" to render it by no means a female monopoly; and the scene was truly animated, diversified, and brilliant.

As the pedestrians moved along, beggar children of both sexes intercepted them at the crossings, and with the customary piteous and whining tone solicited alms. Few appeared to respond to these familiar supplications, and the little beggars, after a few rebuffs, would seat themselves upon the door-steps of some palatial residence, and eye curiously the new-comers approaching in the distance, as if they would recognize by the gait and dress those who had heretofore aided them, or would discover in the physiognomy of strangers indications of a charitable disposition. One little ragged urchin, who might have seen ten summers, was particularly worthy of notice, by any passer-by who might have leisure or curiosity to observe the ways and features of these little outcasts. He was emaciated, and a cripple,

but he managed to hobble around with wonderful speed and dexterity, whenever he deemed it wise to leave his resting-place, a lamp-post, and enter the arena of solicitation. He appeared to act from some inherent or acquired knowledge of physiognomy; for he carefully scrutinized the countenances of the new-comers before they had reached his resting-place, and, in fact, eyed them from head to foot, noting every peculiarity of their dress and gait. He disdained to follow the example of the other children, who hung around his favorite corner and importuned every passer-by, but reserved himself for a few decided and adroit efforts in the line of his calling. He made some failures, but was rewarded by many successes. He knew the exact instant when he must start away from the support of the lamp-post, to present himself before the pedestrians; and he knew, too, the exact poise to give the amputated leg to swing it under their observation at the moment of solicitation. He had discarded the fashionable whine of his class, "Please, sir, give me a penny," and substituted therefor the calm exclamation, "Alas, sir, I've lost my leg!" The novelty of his chosen challenge attracted the attention of many; but more were caught by the bright, upward glance of his brilliant black eye, which glistened with intelligence and spirit. The little fellow was pale, despite the dirt-stains which seemed to have found a welcome home upon his face; and his long, unkemmed hair, of a dingy black hue, was ludicrously surmounted by an adult's beaver hat, which he was obliged to push back every instant, to keep it from covering his eyes. Although emaciated by sickness, or by the rigid diet which poverty had forced upon him, he was a cheerful ragamuffin; and, when not engrossed in the immediate inspection or pursuit of his quarry, the generous public, he indulged in slang remarks upon the pedestrians, or crude witticisms upon their peculiarities, which seemed to entertain highly the little circle of beggars, who occasionally clustered around him to exhibit their trophies or recount their failures in the alms-seeking line. He was evidently a species of oracle for the juvenile beggar fraternity, and invariably the youngsters turned to him with a leer or a shrug of the shoulder, when a pedestrian gave them no encouragement, or saluted him with a grin when the unexpected pennies fell into their outstretched palms. His keen eyes were ever roving along the avenue, and nothing seemed to escape his notice. He even scanned

with anxious eye that forlorn hope, the carriages, as they rolled along; and, when a familiar face looked out of the window, he would fly to the middle of the street, and hobble alongside the vehicle for a moment, holding out his enormous hat, which not unfrequently received a penny plump in the crown. Sometimes a crumpled fragment of paper fluttered out of the carriage window in the direction of his beaver, bearing the stamp, "United States Fractional Currency." His success was marvellous to his companions, who were not sufficiently attentive to the fact that he was never off his guard, and always laid aside pleasure, or withheld his jest or his sarcasm, just at the instant a promising pedestrian came within range. His fellow-urchins fancied it was genius that brought him luck, when it was only talent on the alert. Grown-up competitors in the game of life frequently indulge in the same misconception regarding their successful fellows.

He was leaning quietly against his usual support, and sunning himself, but with his eyes roving up and down the avenue, when a little beggar-girl left the side of a young gentleman whom she had been "running down," and, with a disappointed look, approached him, saying, "Not a durned ting."

"I told ye," was the contemptuous response, "never to run wid yaller kids and sich legs. Sich legs don't pay. Men with legs as shambles, and pants as squeezes, won't give ye nothin'; and when the yaller kids is on too ye might know it's no use. 'Taint in 'em. Them as is tight in the legs is tight in the pocket."

With this sententious opinion, for her special benefit and future guidance, he dismissed the wretched little creature to her duties on the pavé. In another instant the cripple darted after her, and, as he hobbled past her, said:—

"Drab kids is allers genteel and sound; and when the pants is loose, and they aint hurryin' nor anxious-lookin', there's some chance."

In another moment he had intercepted a young gentleman, dressed neatly, but not in the extreme of the fashion, who rejoiced in the possession of the drab gloves. The stranger had a bright, generous face, and was walking apparently at ease with himself and all the world. He paused for an instant, glanced sadly at the amputated limb, and, slipping his fingers in his vest-pocket, drew out a roll of fractional

currency, and handed the cripple one small piece of the representative money. Then he resumed his easy pace, quiet, dignified, cheerful, unconscious, perhaps, that the denomination of the currency was registered high over his head beyond the blue vault. Men who carry small change for beggars sometimes forget the entry on the great book of life. They may act from a long-established principle of charity, and the individual act makes no apparent impression on their minds. It is of too frequent occurrence to be remembered by them; but the All-searching God does not cease to remember.

The little cripple removed his enormous hat, and thanked the stranger, who did not appear to hear him. He had passed on, dreaming, dreaming. Then the urchin hobbled back with a complacent grin to his lamp-post. A little ragamuffin shouted after him: —

"How much, Shorty?"

The only response he received was ten fingers held aloft, as the cripple balanced himself on his crutch. There was a chuckle on the pallid face as he leaned against the lamp-post, and he said to himself, "Drabs *is* sound." After a brief mental review of the past he added, "in general, and when they's walkin' slow."

At this instant the cripple espied an elderly lady coming down the walk, whom he recognized as a familiar distributor of small alms, and he prepared to hobble in front of her, certain, at least, of a kind word, if her pennies were already exhausted. But several of the beggar fraternity in his neighborhood recognized her also, and prepared to anticipate his movements as well as each other's. There was likely to be an animated competition for her favor, and a juvenile race towards her when the immediate calls upon their attention in the persons of nearer pedestrians had been looked after. All felt confident, at least, that the little cripple would be distanced in the race. With the quick glance of a military commander he took in the whole field, and detected at once his inability to reach the coveted position in advance of his rivals. But his eyes never ceased their roving glance along the avenue, and when his competitors darted ahead of him towards the benevolent lady he executed a rapid flank movement which took them all by surprise. With wonderful rapidity he hobbled across the street to the opposite pavement and thumped rapidly along the flags. By the time the little beg-

gars had reached the lady and learned to their mortification that she was out of pennies, "Shorty" had attained a stand directly in front of the steps of a fine brown-stone mansion on the opposite side of the avenue. As he paused before the entrance of the dwelling and leaned heavily upon his crutch, a coupé drawn by two magnificent black steeds whirled up to the pavement directly beside him. The horses were perfectly matched, and in the forehead of each glistened a small white spot resembling a star. Save that solitary frontal mark they were dark as the raven's wing. They were wild with excitement at their release from the stable, and, after a brief display of their curveting qualities, they were reduced to quiet, and stood with proudly arching necks and drooping tails awaiting their burden. Their harness was ornamented with silver, glistening in the sun, and the blinds over their eyes bore the silver letter D. On the panel of the carriage-door was a small turreted castle of solid silver, holding three archers with bent bows. The coachman wore a livery of light gray with silver buttons, and his black hat was circled by a band of silver braid.

The cripple had abandoned a possibility for a high probability. He had seen the dancing black steeds and surmised their destination. Their glistening coats were as familiar to him as the image of his favorite lamp-post. As he stood expectant before the mansion the front door opened and gave egress to a young lady in black, with a velvet cloak and bonnet, who descended the stone steps with imperial grace and moved slowly towards the coupé. She was followed by a tall, elderly gentleman in black, who, after giving directions to the driver, entered the vehicle after her. The cripple had made no effort to detain her, but simply stood where she would be certain to see him before she entered the carriage. Just as the coachman had gathered up his reins for a start, the young lady had selected a piece of money from her purse, and, leaning from the window, she said, "Here, Shorty!" and flung it towards the cripple. It fell on the flag-stones before him; and, hastily raising it from the pavement, he called after the receding carriage, "Thank you, princess!"

It was a larger *douceur* than she was in the habit of giving him, and his black eyes glistened with delight. He hobbled back to his companions, and in response to their inquiries sullenly muttered, "Only a penny." He was too

wise to post them on the value of his familiar friend, "the princess." He was a stern advocate of monopolies.

As the coupé rolled along the avenue, the gentleman said to his companion: —

"Do you know anything about that boy, May? He seems always to hover about your carriage."

"Yes, uncle," was her reply. "I have talked to him several times, and promised to visit his home when I can find time. He has a sister older than himself, who earns a scanty support by doing sewing for a cheap tailoring establishment. He is a bright little fellow, and I intend to persuade him to attend my Sunday-school class. But I have been so hurried with the affairs of the charity school that I have forgotten several matters that I should have looked after. Are we not late? You know Colonel Baldgrave is punctuality itself."

The gentleman drew out his watch, and, after glancing at it, said: —

"No; we shall have at least ten minutes to spare. But what have you been doing to your carriage? It seems to me as if some change had been made in it."

"Only changing the color of the cushions and curtains, uncle. Do you not think it an improvement? I fancied the red too glaring, and thought this drab color would be more elegant."

"It is better, May; but how brilliant the day is! Everybody seems to be out. There is Carrie Deming and her brother. She has not been as social with you as formerly; anything wrong?"

"No, indeed!" was the emphatic response. "When Carrie and I fall out the sky will fall. But she has been very ill. I told you about it, but you have forgotten."

With a murmur of assent the gentleman leaned back again in the coupé and fell into a reverie. He was full of cares and responsibilities; a zealous and tireless worker in the vineyard of the Lord. The carriage rolled on for a time in the great thoroughfare, and both were silent. Presently the horses turned into a side street, and, after a few minutes' rapid driving, paused suddenly at the side entrance of a church.

The clergyman and his niece alighting before the door discovered that another carriage was standing vacant near the same entrance. Passing under the gothic stone cross which

surmounted the porch, the two entered the transept of the sacred edifice, and found the baptismal party seated near the chancel, and awaiting their arrival. The bright rays of the morning sun flooded the arches and aisles of the temple, stealing grotesque colors and shapes from the stained-glass windows, and flinging them upon the communion-rail and the chancel, or dancing upon the grayish walls in trembling pencils of light.

May Delano knelt reverently at the communion-rail in silent prayer, while her uncle proceeded to the vestry to robe himself for the ceremony. A few stragglers, attracted by the sight of the baptismal party entering the church, had followed them in, and were distributed through the pews; some seated in idle curiosity, and others kneeling reverently and awaiting the commencement of the ceremony. Among the latter were several females, evidently church-women. Some of them were elegantly attired, while others appeared from their dress to be of humble life. One of the unpretending class was draped in deep mourning, and had withdrawn herself far from the communion-rail in a pew shaded by one of the pillars. She was kneeling and was closely veiled. Every face was revealed save that unknown face near the pillar. She evidently desired either to conceal her tears, or from some other cause to be unseen. Whatever curiosity might have been aroused by her motionless and muffled figure was soon forgotten in the opening of the solemn rite of Christian baptism. The tall figure of the clergyman, draped in his surplice, moved slowly from the vestry across the chancel and approached the baptismal font, preceded by his attendant. At the same instant May Delano, taking the infant from the arms of the nurse, moved towards the font, accompanied by the brother of Colonel Baldgrave, who was to act in the capacity of godfather. The colonel and the nurse followed them, and all were soon grouped about the marble basin which constituted the font, and which was supported upon the wings of marble angels exquisitely carved. The clergyman's attendant touched a hidden faucet under the font, and the basin was soon filled with crystal water. The infant rested quietly in the arms of May Delano, rolling its blue eyes in wonder upon the white vestments and calm, pale face of the Reverend Thomas Delano. The christening robe, the gift of the godmother, was of the finest linen cambric and Valenciennes lace, the soft meshes of the latter falling on the

dimpled arms and neck of the child, while the exquisite pattern of the wide lace at the bottom of the skirt was plainly revealed as it swept against the sombre background of the mourning-dress of the heiress.

All was hushed as the sweet, solemn voice of the Christian priest uttered the precautionary inquiry to avoid the danger of repetition of the sacrament, which is deemed sacrilege: —

"Hath this child been already baptized, or no?"

The responses of the godparents blended together in denial, and the ceremony went on. As the exhortation of the clergyman rolled in marvellous clearness and melody along the aisles of the church, summoning those present to invoke from God the Father the baptism of the Holy Ghost in behalf of the infant, the veiled mourner in the remote pew drew aside for a moment her sombre veil and gazed eagerly towards the font. Quickly her curiosity was satisfied, and she veiled herself closely again as if anxious to avoid recognition, or perhaps only to escape notice. Whatever may have been the object of her remaining incognito, she was perfectly safe in that momentary unveiling, for all eyes and hearts were held captive by the solemnity and melody of the clergyman's tones. He alone could have seen her. He alone was looking in the direction of her remote lurking-place. But his thoughts were following only the sublime language and ideas of his ritual. He was opening the portals of eternal life to an innocent wanderer, a lonely waif, and an idle curiosity in the midst of his duty and in the temple of his God was no part of his character. He did not see her. He did not catch that brief glimpse of a beauty as startling as Psyche's when crowds erected altars to her as the second Venus, and as pale, too, as that beauty when her agonized heart sought her lost lord through the whole earth, and vainly courted self-destruction. In that brief unveiling was revealed one of those ideal faces which gleam in our holiest dreams close beside the great white throne of God. It was a glimpse of the hereafter, a flash from the Eternal City; and instantly the dark veil fell.

The voice of the priest fell then into the devotional modulation of the accompanying prayer. Then followed the reading from the Gospel by St. Mark, and the brief exhortation and the prayer. When the clergyman proceeded to address the sponsors upon the obligations they were about to assume, the veiled mourner beside the pillar appeared to

bend forward her head in deepening interest. But when the solemn demand was made to them in behalf of their charge, "Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" she drew aside her veil again, as if it impeded her sense of hearing, and eagerly listened, as if some unknown and unfamiliar beauty in the rites of the church was for the first time made manifest to her. She listened eagerly to the succeeding declaration of the sponsors of their belief in "all the Articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed" and the promise to "keep God's holy will and commandments." But when the clergyman took the child into his arms and said to the godparents "Name this child," her large, lustrous eyes gleamed with a strange light as she eagerly listened for their response. An expression of disappointment swept across her face when they answered in so low a key that the name could not reach her remote part of the church. At this instant the infant, who had thus far won golden opinions as to its orderly and quiet conduct, began to manifest signs of dissatisfaction at its change of position. A short cry burst from its lips, and it evidently was just on the point of commencing an elaborate protest against remaining in the Reverend Thomas Delano's arms, when that gentleman, by a ruse peculiarly his own, allowed his left arm, which encircled the child, to droop towards the font, so that one of the infant's tiny hands fell splashing into the water. The contact with an element with which she was so familiar delighted the child, and she hushed her inchoate cry and commenced splashing the water about as was her wont in the nursery. This amused her amply during the remainder of the ceremony, and her pleasant little "coo, coo" as she played with the water blended sweetly with the words of baptism. But, when the sound of the child's voice in distress first penetrated the dim shadows of the church where the veiled mourner was kneeling, she started, and an expression of intense pity swept across her features. Her eyes anxiously peered out towards the uneasy little one; a strange yearning tenderness filled them, and she made an involuntary motion as if she would rise from her knees. At this instant her attention was chained by the announcement of the name given to the child in the clear, distinct utterance

of the priest: "Violet, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

At this name she looked bewildered. Some powerful emotion thrilled her, for her hands grasped the front of the pew for support. She looked for a moment as if she would have fallen to the floor, so deathly pale did she become. But, controlling herself with an effort, she seemed to recollect the necessity of concealment, and, glancing quickly around to the scattered inmates of the pews before her, she discovered that she was still unobserved, and immediately drew her veil over her features. No one had noticed her marvellous beauty in that momentary absorption of her faculties. Whatever motive may have brought her so closely veiled into the sanctuary of God, she was still unknown or unrecognized by those present.

Chapter IX.

The soul of man
Createth its own destiny of power;
And, as the trial is intenser here,
His being hath a nobler strength in heaven.

WILLIS.

THE intolerable heat of a July afternoon had penetrated every dwelling of the city. It was the fourth week of an excessive drought. For thirty days not a drop of rain had fallen to cool the pavements or clean the gutters. No refreshing breezes had arisen with the fall of the evening shades to relieve the intensity of the days of suffering and exhaustion. The brick walls of the dwellings and shops, and the pavements of the streets had become so thoroughly heated by the burning rays of the sun, that at night they emitted caloric like the sides of a baker's oven. In the cleanly and broad streets of the up-town district it was fearful enough, but, in the narrow and garbage-filled thoroughfares where the poor congregate, it was like a special scourge of God; for there where the dogs lay panting upon the door-steps with lolling tongues, and half-clad children crept forgetful of their play under the shade of door-ways and sheds, a stench

from rotting vegetables and pools of stagnant and foul water rose upon the air, and, blending with the suffocating heat, bred disease, pollution, and death. When a faint wind breathed over the streets, it was so heated and impure that it brought no refreshment, but only gathered and spread the volatile dust, whirling it into bloodshot eyes, and driving it into feeble and almost exhausted lungs. Strong and brawny machinists, broad-shouldered laborers with spade and pick-axe, hardy cartmen, and sailors familiar with every clime, struggled and fretted in the intolerable prolongation of the heat and the drought. They spoke of sleepless nights when they had tossed uneasy upon their beds, and every other moment gathered to the hydrants and water-tanks to quench the inordinate cravings of their thirst. The unfortunate sick lay panting and unrefreshed upon their beds, with feeble pulse and feebler hope. The wounded in the hospitals sought to avoid the mortification of their wounds by frequent applications of ice, and mothers hung sorrowfully and constantly over the couches of their feeble infants, weak and rash-covered from the intensity of the sun's rays. The fashionable and the wealthy had long since fled to country homes and country resorts. The poor remained, and suffered, and died. In the churches prayers were offered for the gift of tinkling, cooling, gushing rain; but still the All-Wise withheld his blessing, and the city suffered and sweltered in the sultry air.

Come, then, for a moment, light-hearted and happy dweller in country shades, fanned by the cool breeze sweeping along your brookside home, — come to the suffering city and realize for once how gracious and gentle God has been to you. Come panting along this furnace thoroughfare; bear for a little while and patiently this loathsome air, and heed not in contempt and shuddering these half-clad, gasping children of God that line the way; for in their behalf your Lord and Master died as really and truly and effectually as he died for you. Come, for the journey may unfold to you a realm of new and beneficial thought. Perhaps you have imbibed the great and thrifty and prevailing impression that none in this broad land can suffer the pangs of hunger, and poverty, and hopeless despair, unless through their own fault. Come and listen and learn, for you have those who are dear to you as life itself, those who are gifted and gentle, full of hope, full of rich, earnest ambition, manly in their tread, earnest in

their hearts, your future hope and pride. You rear them tenderly, educate them generously, and hope for them the brightest and best success on earth. And yet in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, your wealth, your means, may be swept away by fire, by financial panic, or by war, and they be left alone to battle with the world. Do you feel quite sure that with that admirable education you can trust them all at once and inexperienced on the treacherous sea of life? Do you not remember any noble, generous friends of yours who have foundered and gone down by unlucky fate, by sickness, or by fraudulent and wicked traitors? Have you a noble, gifted boy, inheriting your own quick business talent, and yet with just enough of his mother's gentleness and trust running through his veins to make you anxious over his career? Come, then, to the city, and learn in this forlorn and filthy den of poverty to look kindly upon every young and struggling man that crosses your path, for, unknown to you, he may have enjoyed the same grand start in life and the same favoring winds you have given to your beloved and beautiful. Come up this heated and creaking stairway, higher and higher and higher still. Fear not this momentary deprivation of your comfort and your ease, for yonder in the garret lies one who had a father once, a mother, too, gentle and beautiful as the one that nursed your boy. There he lies, helpless, deserted, and alone. He has struggled nobly, he has never faltered in the employment of every faculty God has given him, and yet he has failed, failed utterly, and has fallen in his harness in the midst of earnest, unremitting, noble toil. Upon his beautiful head the cruel feet of Ate have trodden, and in that suffocating garret her evil spirit reigns supreme.

Week after week, and month after month, has that prostrate man clung to those scattered papers which strew his wretched table, in the vain struggle to win from them bread, and honor, and reputation. By the light of the early dawn has he risen, and, after swallowing his scanty crust of bread, and his cup of cheap tea, resolutely and patiently seated himself to copy the legal papers given him by a prosperous firm of lawyers. From the pittance per folio allowed him by these business-driven jurists, has he derived the means to pay for the rent of his garret, his daily morsel of bread, his fire, and his writing materials. To secure this pittance, he has risen at dawn, and worked till sunset, never leaving

his room except to return the originals and his copy to the owners. The morning sun has arisen upon him for months and found him ever driving that rapid pen, *scratch*, *scratch*, *scratch*, over the paper. The noontide blaze has heated his garret to furnace heat, and still the ever-hurrying pen sped on. The evening shadows have fallen, and, while a ray of light remained, the resolute and earnest pen marked down summons and complaints, demurrers and decrees, deeds and mortgages, leases and charter-parties, bonds and judgments, and all the legal paraphernalia and technical phraseology by which property is transferred, contracts solemnized, and litigation carried on. Then, when the shadows of the night obliterated every trace of line and letter upon his paper, his daily work for humble bread was done. Then, with aching eyes, and weary back and arms, he turned to his own peculiar aim and purpose in life. The daylight work had been almost purely mechanical. The toil to which he now devoted himself was that which demands the employment of the brain, the use of that delicate and wonderful mechanism which is the lever that moves the world, the motive power of human action, which assimilates man to the divinity. Carefully cultivated and judiciously improved, that power of analysis and creation which appropriately reigns in the *crown* of the head, dilates, fructifies, develops into new firmaments of intellectual stars, and daily reaches nearer and higher to that ideal brain with which the celestials shall be endowed. But, overworked, overstrained, too closely concentrated upon one object, that power becomes exhausted, diseased, and by a wise dispensation of God is furnished with an alarm bell to sound the signal for rest and forbearance. Like telegraphic wires, the nerves run from it to every seat of consciousness and pain in the human organization, and, when those delicate signals vibrate, the wise man falls upon his couch and sleeps.

But the lonely and poverty-stricken student sought a home, a crown, among the immortals. The Olympus to which he aspired was an intellectual realm, where, in company with the poets, authors, and benefactors of mankind, he might ever reign in the hearts of present and future generations, as one who had struggled and triumphed in his efforts to make men better, more unselfish, and purer by his pen. Hour after hour had he written, and reflected, and given rein to his imaginative powers, that by his persua-

sive logic, illustrated by new metaphors, and purified by crystal waters from the classic fountains of the past, he might prove a career of purity, self-sacrifice, and honor to be the most alluring path for a human soul. He toiled on, night after night, allowing himself brief intervals of sleep, that he might trace through the pages of fiction a noble life terminating in a blissful eternity. The Elysii Campi of his imagination were regions of perpetual intellectual and sensuous spring. That which was most prized on this earth — the love of art, the love of scenery, human love, the love of beauty, and the aspirations of learning — was all to receive new development and perfect satisfaction beyond the valley of death. Boldly and searchingly he had analyzed the frivolities in which society is engrossed, alluringly had he painted the wonders of scientific discovery, and the delights of learning. In the persons of his hero and heroine he had depicted a higher life for man and woman, assimilating itself to the life of the man-God, a blended career of works and studies in the interest of humanity. He aimed in his work to instruct, and to guide his fellows towards a life which should deify virtue and prepare for a better life hereafter. Pursuing investigations which his early classical education suggested, he had time and again secured a tome of antiquity from a public library of the city, to which the legal firm that employed him as a copyist had secured him admittance. From such sources he shed light and illustration upon his work. It was a learned and entertaining narrative of virtue from the earliest ages. Around the memory of the illustrious son of Sophroniscus, the statuary, he wove an exquisite wreath of poetry and beautiful description. Comparing the sophists of his own land to the renowned rhetorician of Iulis, he traced the sad career of perverted genius in ancient and modern days, following it to a grave of shame and a memory of eternal reproach. But, for the development of beauty in art and religion, he fearlessly announced himself a champion. Tracing the history of painting from the days of the illustrious pupil of Demophilus to the exquisite creations of Christian art as manifested in the schools of Dusseldorf, he proclaimed it to be a great agent of refinement in religious idealism, blending with its sister art, music, in a powerful influence over heart and brain, leading men upward and onward to that celestial home

where the perfection of melody and harmony shall alone be realized.

Maintaining that, from the earliest ages to the present, those who have devoted life to the pursuits of gain or glory have lost the true peace and joy of existence, while the devotees of science and the benefactors of their fellow-beings have avoided the worst stings of life, and escaped that nervous unrest which appertains to business and ambition, he presented in the person of his hero one clothed in the wisdom of the past and the present, and with one hand grasping the casket of ancient lore, reaching forth to the crown of glory which the Righteous Judge shall award to him alone who loves and benefits humanity. He contrasted the venerable pagan and philosopher of Samos, clothed in his long, white robe, with flowing beard and golden crown, with the Christian sage, simple and unostentatious in his dress, and kneeling every morning before the altar of God in supplication that the acquisition of wisdom might render him humble, just, and generous to his fellows, and that he might be deemed worthy to wear alone the crown of thorns in which his Master was mocked.

Under the magic of his pen history sprang to a new life, clothed in the halo of romance, and yet leaving indelibly upon the mind true facts which could never die, and which tended to excite in readers love of ancient research and critical analysis of historical records. His purpose was noble, and on every page arose the figure of virtue robed in white and ever triumphant and beautiful. But the overworked brain revolted at the excessive toil. Deprivation of sleep and rest gradually undermined that noble citadel of the head. The sinewy frame lost flesh, the cheek paled, the rich blue eyes burned with a strange and fearful lustre, and at the junction of the brain and spinal cord a painful sensation came daily and nightly to disarm the scholar, or blunt his pen. Impatient at the interruption, he bound about his temples a towel soaked in water, and fearlessly worked on. Far into the lonely night flashed the rays of his lamp. A resolute will bent over that plain, pine table, but now, alas! it was encased in a feeble frame. Lower and lower sank the light in its socket, and its fading rays cast upon the wall a shadow vague and fearful of an emaciated scholar defying the laws of his being, and obeying only the dictates of his indomitable will.

But night after night, and week after week, and month after month, he held on. At last a shock came, gently at first, but a sufficient warning to the wise. A sudden and violent jar or vibration of the nerves of his arm startled the student, and he raised his towel-bound head from his manuscript. A smile passed over his wan face at the alarm it occasioned, and then he resumed his pen. The hour passed and no further jarring of the arm returned, and he laid aside his manuscript and fell heavily upon his bed for a brief sleep, a sleep of two hours, till the dawn should come to rouse him for the day's work, — the steady copying of the legal documents by daylight. When the dawn arrived he waked, from the sheer force of habit, and resumed his daily toil. But a dull, heavy pain bound his head like an iron band, and when he arose from his table at length, to return the legal papers to the office of the attorneys, a dizziness overcame him for a moment, so that he grasped at the wall of the room for support. This passed away, and he hurriedly descended the creaking and narrow stairway to the street, and made his way to his employers' office. They noticed his increasing paleness and loss of flesh, and commented upon it; but he turned the subject lightly and asked for more material with which to earn his bread. They, too, were laborious members of their profession, and had grown thin in midnight studies, and took no further notice of the haggard, poor, elegant-limbed young man, who came so often for their papers. But, as the student left their office, the senior advocate remarked to his partner: —

"That man has an eye like Apollo when he met the mariners after their adventure in the Bay of Crissa. I have seen the painting abroad, and I never shall forget the expression of that eye."

"Ah!" was the response of his busy partner. "No doubt he is some *nullius filius* of some one of our city gentry. Where are those Beekman papers, Robb? I have mislaid them."

The last speaker had served the elder Earle professionally in several important suits, and received from his hands princely fees. But this destitute son was entirely unknown to him. One word would have made him Constant Earle's friend. But the outcast was too proud to give the firm his real name, and indeed was utterly ignorant of the fact that one of them had been his father's confidant and legal advi

ser. Had the identity of the poor copyist of law papers with the son of the great merchant prince, Earle, been established at that interview, there would have been developments which would seriously mar the serene flow of this narrative.

The weary student left the office with new papers, slowly descended the stairs to the busy street, and with a dull pain binding his head made his way along the thoroughfares, and, regaining at length his own narrow and filthy street, hurried along its heated pavements, and ascended to his garret. The air glowed like a furnace in the summer sun, and when he had reached his quarters, just beneath the roof, he sank upon his bed with exhaustion, the legal papers falling neglected upon the floor. It was the height of the "heated term." How long he remained upon his bed he knew not. He awoke to find the sun just sinking behind the aged and filthy tenement houses on the west. He had slept long and heavily, and from the fearful heat and closeness of the place he was covered with perspiration like water. He arose in alarm, and gathering up the papers from the floor, proceeded to copy them at his table. Before the daylight had vanished he was busily at work, with a wet towel bound tightly about his head. Slowly drooped the sun to its western bed, as rapidly he wrote on. The shadows deepened, the great fiery ball of red, which indicated another day of heat and drought, disappeared. The shrill voices of half-naked children, yelling and romping in the street, reached his ears and worried his overtaxed nerves. The hot blood mounted to his brain and his eyes grew bloodshot. Still, with a will which surmounted every obstacle, he wrote on. The night-shadows, which at length obscured his manuscript, drove him from his table for a lamp. He lighted it, and placed it near his papers. He paused a moment before resuming his labors. The heat was fearful, and his cup of agony was nearly full. He sat upon the side of his wretched pallet to rest. At that instant his arm twitched violently. He passed a hand over it to soothe the violent jarring sensation. A sheet of bright red light passed before his eyes. A sound deep and solemn as far off church-bells boomed in his ears. With a cry, a faint, piteous call on the name of his dead mother, and his ever-living God, he fell senseless across his pallet. It was the fearful disease, *phrenitis*.

The lamp-light burned feebly in the darkness and silence

of the garret. Through the open and miniature window poured in the heated and offensive atmosphere of the crowded city. Through it came also the yelping of curs, the rattle of carts, the screams and laughter of vagrant children romping in the darkening streets, and the vague hum of business closing up for the day. Voices of cartmen shouting to each other, or cursing the laggard pace of their overheated beasts, mingled with the roar and clash of machinery kept running through the night. Amid a Babel of sounds and an evening of suffocating air, the last gleams on the western sky faded out and were lost. The prostrate man heeded them not. His eyes and face were swelling rapidly. A red flush was stealing over his countenance, and at intervals he muttered incoherent sentences or moaned in unconsciousness. There was a violent heat in his head, which gradually pervaded his whole body. His pulse was strong, hard, quick; his tongue was furred and his breathing heavy. Occasionally he turned in restlessness, and, opening his bloodshot eyes, raved in delirium. But there was no one to hear him, none to succor him. He was alone. The stained and heated rafters of the roof showed dimly above him. Across their dusty lengths, spiders had woven their webs and silently watched for the droning flies, which had hastened in at the lighting of the lamp, and now buzzed about the head of the prostrate student, or settled fearlessly upon his face. Tenderly had he been reared, and kindly soothed in every illness by a mother whose touch was peace, and a sister whose voice was melody. He was now fighting off the grim monster alone, his sole weapons inarticulate words and arms flung at intervals back upon his bed. A large rat, allured by the silence, gnawed vigorously at a plank in the floor, seeking an entrance. Darker and darker grew the night, brighter and brighter spread the scarlet flush over the face of the sufferer, and louder and more fearlessly gnawed the rat at his task. The noises in the street died slowly away till at length no sound was heard save the monotonous roll of the machinery in a distant iron mill, and the solitary howl of a dog rising at intervals mournfully upon the air. The busy world was falling gradually to sleep, and he was being left neglected in his agony. The cruel Parcæ had spun for him a fearful destiny, — the unsuccessful, struggling life of genius clothed in rags, and the solitary death-bed unattended by a single friend.

The gloom and silence of the midnight came; up to the shadowy throne swept the dusky queen, unattended by a single star, and as she poised her sceptre over the hushed earth the mournful toll of a city clock chimed the hour. The sufferer aroused, and, impatient at the sound, opened his eyes and moaned in unison. Then the lids closed in a long-continued and death-like stupor. The hours rolled on, and no succor came. At intervals consciousness returned for a moment to intensify his agony, and then he murmured that word so full of tender memory, of agonizing loss, "My mother." Alas! she had long since sped to the better land, where all tears are wiped away, and the yearning cry of mortal agony was answered only by the silence and the stifling air. Alone, alone, with all his wonderful beauty and his generous heart, his face gleaming with all the radiant loveliness of Myrrha's son, his emaciated figure fashioned in all the grace, and symmetry, and power of Agonius, and his voice and soul ever as eloquent on the side of valor and wisdom as the faithful Mentor.

Morning came at length, and with it came the agonizing heat of the tireless drought. The sun arose upon the awakened city, and brought a drier air, a more painful glare, and a more exhausting influence than on the day before. Soon its fearful rays penetrated the garret, and the half-conscious man struggled to rise, and, falling backward, gasped for water. No precious drop was there. An agonizing thirst had come, the furred tongue was whiter, and the trembling lips more parched, and the body more fevered than when the sun went down. In the struggle and the sense of helplessness, consciousness at length vanished once more, and the gradually weakening limbs relaxed and lay like death.

Hour after hour passed by, and the sinking sufferer still moaned on in delirium and loneliness. The disease had made a fearful stride, and still no succor came. The sun mounted to the zenith, and the garret air glowed with a deadlier heat and a fouler stench. The neglected phrenitis must soon develop into raving madness. And thus the noon passed by. The hour of *two* was marked by a distant clock when the eyes of the sufferer opened suddenly and glared upon a woman, tall and startling as the one that sprang from the skull of Jupiter at the blow of Vulcan's brazen axe.

Chapter X.

For she hath lived with heart and soul alive
To all that makes life beautiful and fair.

AMELIA.

"*Irez-vous chez vous avant qu'il vienne?*"

The inquiry was addressed by a coachman in livery to a lady on the sunny side of forty, for whom he had opened the carriage door, and who stood upon the pavement in momentary uncertainty of purpose.

"*Nous resterons ici jusqu' à ce qu'ils viennent*," was the reply, as his mistress swept her way through a crowd of children who had gathered on the walk before a miserable row of tenement houses, to gaze upon the marvel of an elegant equipage and a fine lady in her summer plumage. Unmindful of the excessive heat and the crowd of dirty children, she glanced up at the number over the door of one of the filthiest houses in the row, and, finding that she was correct in her first glance, she gathered up her elegant skirts into as narrow a compass as possible, with a view of entering the hall before her. As she pressed in through the narrow entrance the children crowded around the door to watch her proceedings. To their amazement she passed on along the hall, and commenced the ascent of the first rickety flight of wooden steps, mounting fearlessly upward with her flower-spotted organdy rustling against the walls on either side, and her white plumes nodding from her straw hat. She paused a moment at the first landing, and then pushed on up the second flight of steps, after an exclamation regarding the offensive smells about her. The second floor was crowded with families of tenants remarkable alike for their poverty and their want of cleanliness. Upon arriving at the third floor, she discovered the same evidences of numbers and filth. She was now panting violently from her exertions, and the intolerable heat of the place. Nevertheless, upon looking about her, she discovered a flight of rough wooden steps, evidently leading to a garret. Up these she resolutely pushed her way till she reached a door. She rapped sharply upon it with the little red coral handle of her white silk parasol. Receiving no response, she repeated her summons. The same

mysterious silence prevailed. An anxious expression crossed her face, and she raised the latch of the door unbidden. As she pushed the door inward it creaked sharply on its hinges. She was nearly stifled by the terrible heat flung downward from the rafters and shingles. Closing the door behind her involuntarily as she entered, she found herself in the presence of an unconscious human being. He was lying upon the outside of his simple couch, with his garments on. His face was fearfully scarlet, and, as she approached his bedside, his eyes opened and glared upon her. He was evidently delirious. She could obtain no response to her inquiries, and, laying aside her parasol and gloves, she drew his only chair to the bed and, seating herself, gazed upon his emaciated features.

"Good God!" she exclaimed, in profound sympathy, "what suffering! and so beautiful too. Hands like a prince, and a mouth like an angel."

A brief inspection of his countenance satisfied her that she had no time to lose. She glanced about the garret, and, seeing the scattered papers and the writing materials, realized at once that the disease was caused by excessive mental exertion. She went to the window, and, looking out, listened for the sound of carriage-wheels. She saw her own elegant establishment standing in the street, but she awaited the arrival of another vehicle. Turning from the window she carefully gathered up the legal papers and flung them into a box of manuscripts she found under the table. They appeared to be the only objects in the room worth preserving. But upon looking under the pillow of the bed she found a Bible. On the fly-leaf was written in a delicate hand: —

"CONSTANT EARLE FROM HIS MOTHER.

"Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret places of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah."

It was a small but elegant edition of the Scriptures, and she placed it with the manuscripts in the box. Notwithstanding the insufferable heat, she sat down there and patiently waited. It was a strange sight, — that indomitable lady, clothed in the costliest habiliments of fashion, and having at her command the luxuries and comforts attendant upon the ownership of millions, sitting so resolutely in charity and patience beside the couch of poverty and anguish, in a garret recalling the temperature of Hades. It would have

been difficult for the gay votaries of fashion who frequented her superb saloons on Fifth Avenue, where congregated the élite of the city, to recognize in this resolute watcher the celebrated Madame Benon, whose entertainments attracted alike the star of the foreign embassy, the ermine of the judge, the rose of the poet, and the wit of the littérateur. Her dinners in town, her breakfasts at her country villa, her patronage of art, of music, of song, of science, of philology, were as well known to the ton of the metropolis as the literary soirée of Madame Botta, the tournament of Madame Paran Stevens, and the exquisite charity concert of Miss Bodenheimer. How limited a conception of the character of a woman of fashion does one glean from the rumors and gossip of society at the metropolis! Madame Benon, independent of criticism, gave her entertainments and dinners, gathered about her congenial friends, frequented her box at the opera, enjoyed the cultivated society of artists and foreign embassadors, and dispensed her charities royally, judiciously, and in her own way. For an entire winter she supported from her own purse a whole settlement of foreign emigrants congregated within a mile of Central Park. Along the halls of a hospital on Long Island Sound she wandered up and down, dispensing clothing to the destitute soldiers wounded in the cause of the Union. The poor, exhausted, homesick heroes gathered about her to receive the cooling and nourishing fruits she had purchased for them, and blessing her earnest, eloquent face, as she listened to their distress. Unfettered by the prejudices of sectionalism, she carried to the rebel wounded on David's Island clothing and delicacies, and, returning to the city, ransomed from the draft, at heavy price, two mechanics (drafted for the Federal army), at the eager supplication of their families. Miles away from her home she met an invalid, supported by the arms of two men, and sinking from extreme exhaustion. Descending from her carriage with the lady who accompanied her, she resigned the vehicle entirely to the sick man and his comrades, and walked with her friend two miles through the country dust and heat to a car. Her charities ever flowed generously and serenely from her impulsive heart.

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave

me drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

"When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

"Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Silently and seriously went on the watch beside the prostrate and the suffering. The burning rays poured in upon the watcher's organdy, and flashed from the golden chain and jewelled clasp at her belt, as she bound a towel, soaked in the bucket of water she had noticed outside his door, upon the temples of the fallen man. At the frequent touch of her soothing application he opened his eyes, hazy and glaring with delirium, and muttered incoherently of the Lernæan Lake, whose waters restored the daughters of Danaus. At length, impatient of the long delay of those for whom she waited, she went to the window for a breath of air, so painfully oppressive had the place become. The atmosphere was as motionless as that of the fabled Tartarus. Her watch was finally relieved by the entrance of a burly man in a white cravat, who pushed open the door without knocking, and exclaimed: —

"Madame, your pardon; I was detained by a patient who called at my office. This place is frightful. Get out of it just as quick as you can. You will make yourself sick. Ah! this is the case — I see at once what it is — phrenitis. No wonder, in such a den. Poor fellow! what an intellectual development! And look at that frame too. He must have made a long fight of it."

The physician, with a face like a full moon, and black eyes glistening as those of Hippocrates when he announced his conviction, "Knowledge of medicine is the sister and companion of wisdom," drew near to the couch and raised the sufferer's hand.

"Hard, quick pulse," he muttered, letting the arm fall back upon the couch. Then he added, in a louder tone, as

his keen eyes scanned his patient's scarlet face, "must be bled first thing, — yes, very first thing. But it will never do to keep this poor fellow here. I couldn't bring the devil out of it in such a nest. He must be kept cool. I'll shave his head and apply ice, but not here. This infernal den will neutralize every remedy."

"I can take him to St. Luke's if you think best," replied Madame Benon. "Will it do to carry him in my carriage? We can wrap him in this blanket, and your man can hold him up. He came with you?"

"Yes; he's below with my horse. But do you think you can assume such a burden on yourself? You might save this poor fellow by putting him under the nursing he's sure to receive at St. Luke's. Will you do it, madame?"

"Certainly I will, and gladly," was the response. "But I must hurry out of this heat; I'm growing faint under it."

"Run downstairs, then, and send my man up here; we'll have him down and in your carriage directly."

Gladly availing herself of this direction, the lady made her way down into the street and sent up the doctor's assistant to the garret. "Be sure and bring the manuscripts and the book with you," was her direction, as the servant mounted the stairway. She then resumed her seat in the carriage to escape the violence of the sun's rays. The novelty of elegant visitors, in that remote and foul neighborhood, attracted a crowd of children and adults about the door. She secured the services of two of the latter to hold her own horses, and the physician's spirited mare, that she might despatch her coachman to the assistance of the party in the garret. There was a longer delay than she had anticipated in the movements of the physician, and when at last he made his appearance supporting his patient, aided by the others, he informed her that he had already resorted to bleeding; and when the body was safely deposited in her carriage, he gave her instructions for the nurse at the hospital.

"Inquire for Helen Blakely," he said, "and tell her I direct the same treatment as she gave to Miners. She understands my system of treatment thoroughly. Give her this written direction, and she will understand the rest."

He wrote rapidly upon a slip of paper, addressed to the superintendent of the hospital thus: —

"Put patient, if possible, under care of H. Blakely, shave head at once, and apply iced-water; drain bowels with salts; give 1 qr. gr. tartar emetic and 6 grs. nitrate of potash in solution, hourly, until skin is moist; teaspoonful of Hoffman's anodyne liquor, every two hours, will ease pain, and give sleep. I will be around before midnight.

"McAllister."

With a quick bow of his moon-like head, he turned away, sprang into his buggy, with an agility surprising in one of his obesity, and was off. The carriage, with the invalid and his attendants, turned slowly, and moved on after his receding figure, — Madame Benon sitting with her feet upon the student's manuscripts and legal papers which she had caused to be flung into the bottom of her carriage.

Could the unconscious student have known to whom he was indebted for his rescue from death, and the judicious plan pursued in securing that result, he would surely have recalled the lines of his favorite poet: —

"But grant that actions best discover man;
Take the most strong, and sort them as you can.
The few that glare each character must mark,
You balance not the many in the dark.
What will you do with such as disagree?
Suppress them, or miscall them policy?"

Chapter XX.

Elegance floats about thee like a dress,
Melting the airy motion of thy form
Into one swaying grace; and loveliness,
Like a rich tint that makes a picture warm,
Is lurking in the chestnut of thy tress.

Willis.

"Look out! Harry!" The exclamation was accompanied by a sudden grip on the arm of the exposed gentleman, who rejoiced in that patronymic, and who was instantly jerked backward a pace or two in perfect bewilderment. At that instant a horse swept by like the wind, bearing a lady in a dark riding-habit, who sat erect and wore a gentleman's

black hat, wound with a blue veil. It was a narrow escape; for the steed was large and powerful, and dashed ahead with the *élan* of Mazeppa's untamed Tartar. She bowed slightly to the rescuer, while a smile of recognition lighted her face, and in another instant she was gone, with a cloud of dust circling after her, and followed by a mounted groom, with top-boots, who was put upon his mettle to keep her in sight.

"I saved you from an inglorious fate, you scarred veteran of Shiloh!"

"Who the devil was it?" was the response. "If all the women at Newport move at that pace, I shall steer clear of the crossings."

The last speaker wore a vest, with the button of the United States Navy, a suit of black, and a Panama straw hat. His arm was in a sling.

"That, sir, was a lady, to whom I intend to introduce you to-night. She will be at the ball; and, as she has a *penchant* for the naval service, you will be in her good graces at once. Her name is Delano. She is a New Yorker, an heiress, an orphan. She travels, piously, in the '*via media*,' it is said; is of good family, and will make somebody a good wife. But, for Heaven's sake, if she asks you to ride with her, make your will first, and leave me that South American hammock you brought back from the Amazon expedition. I've set my heart on that trifle."

The wounded officer linked his sound arm in that of his friend as they moved on, and asked: —

"Is she beautiful, — this dasher, about whom you have wasted more words than I ever knew you devote in praise to any petticoat?"

"She is that, — not only beautiful, but stylish, and intelligent too; a rare combination. She will be the belle there to-night. Your friend, Miss McIntosh, can scarcely conceal her envy at the scores of men that girl manages to soften in the brain. She don't seek attention, but moves on naturally enough and seems to gather up men as a magnet does needles. They seem to stick to her; but once in a while she shakes them off, and when she does they drop dead enough; they never follow her again. I reckon a woman who cares only for sensible men must be frightfully bored sometimes by the possession of beauty. If she's a lady it pains her to wound; and some men will persevere until they get snubbed. But look to your moorings, or you'll be drift-

ing after her, too, in spite of your Castilian beauties, and your other transatlantic fancies."

"And do you fancy," was the quiet response, "that I could ever forget my dark-eyed Carmen, the pride of Andalusia, with her fairy figure, and her raven hair dressed with flowers, dancing gayly to the sound of the castanets, and those dark, lustrous eyes gleaming with soul and tenderness, for the sake of some American amazon, who rides the men down in the public streets, and spits the hearts of gallant fellows as remorselessly upon her fan as I would so many quails at the fire? Nonsense, Blake; there is no beauty and elegance like that of Spain, where modesty and gentleness are cultivated as the great aim and object of woman's life. I detest your women of strength; I'm afraid of them. Give me a Spanish ball before your formal assembly in that heated room, to-night; or, rather, give me a stroll with the *majos* and *majas*, the rural belles and gallants of Spain, as they tread the gallery that looks upon the Square of Vivarrambla. What beautiful forms and flashing eyes pass by! while the rich swell and cadence of the bands of music mingle with the joyous laughter and pleasantry that greet you on every side. That's the country for life. Your New York belle is harmless. I can ward off every dart of Cupid."

"Pride goeth before a fall," replied his friend. "But you give me an opportunity to present you to-night. I know your heart has absolutely crystallized in the glance of beauty. But all men are vulnerable. Remember the son of Thetis."

"Rather a personal thrust, my friend," responded the officer. "You have forgotten that the wound in my heel, from that infernal shell, will exclude me from the circle who will solicit the hand of this divinity for a dance to-night."

"Yes. I beg your pardon, Harry. That little annoyance of yours had escaped my recollection. But you can bring the witchery of that crafty tongue of yours into better play from that very fact. The wound will interest her at the start. She is very patriotic — immensely."

"That was a splendid gelding your divinity was riding," remarked the naval hero, after a pause. "He covered distance with the ease of a thorough-bred. I caught one good

glimpse of his quality after my escape, and he was fleet as the lightning."

"Ay! he is that," was the response. "He gave my roan a brush for two miles, and beat him twenty lengths. Miss Delano was riding him, and she is as sure in her seat as a jockey. She amazes me, but then her bay knows her by heart. He moves to the sound of her voice. She uses no whip."

"What does she call him?"

"Warwick, the indomitable culmination and omega of independent baronetage. It is her own conceit, and I must confess the beast is aptly named. He is just as aristocratic and independent as that veteran noble, and when she is the rider everything is in harmony. She can make more out of the brute than any one. But you will see her ride. She is the toast here. But come and take supper with me, and we will go to the ball together!"

The two moved on slowly towards the lodgings of Colonel Bufort. The one was as celebrated for the brilliancy of his cavalry dashes in the southern war, as the other for his varied and invaluable services in the navy of his country.

Later that evening an ambitious mother rallied her daughter upon the same subject.

"If you're not careful, Henrietta, that Miss Delano will monopolize Lord Carnochan altogether to-night. He admires her evidently, and she plays aristocracy to perfection. You must not be so crazy to dance; you miss so many good opportunities of securing desirable partners. If you dance with Henry Caperton every time he asks you, you will never secure anything desirable — *never;*" and the judicious matron fanned herself violently as she leaned back in her chair. She was elegantly attired in lilac moiré silk, with lace flounces, and was superintending with unusual interest her daughter's toilet. The crisis demanded that Henrietta should not be left entirely to the judgment of her dressing-maid. A foreign fish had ventured in the vicinity of her matrimonial nets, and her best piscatorial skill was in requisition. Her own tact had elevated her from the position of a mechanic's daughter to that of a mistress of the coffers of a New York banker of princely wealth. The issue of that marriage was standing before a large mirror in attentive admiration of the labors of her *femme de chambre.* She was blonde, and beautiful, and radiant in her misty robes of illusion and pink,

the delicate texture of the white illusion circling her neck and falling in long ends behind. A shadow swept across her fair face, and she answered quickly: —

"It destroys all the pleasure of society to be eternally scheming and watching people. Let her have him. If he don't come after me I surely will never run after him. Papa says it's vulgar to be courting men; and his judgment is entitled to respect, for he is fashionable authority, by his *family* as well as by his wealth."

And with this thrust between the joints of the maternal armor, she resumed her self-inspection in the glass. Nevertheless, she possessed the same ambition as her mother, and was in pursuit of the same game, but by a more covert and judicious approach. Lord Carnochan had flattered her by his civilities, and she was already sufficiently eager for his attentions to require no accelerating spur from her mother. Her jealousy was acute, and such reminders annoyed her vanity. Her superior acumen had disclosed to her the fact that the nobleman in question was anxious to replenish his almost exhausted treasury, that the sun of his title might be properly embellished with radiating golden glory. At present it resembled that rayless ball of fire which is suspended in the dull and dimming mists of his native land. She had secretly written to her indulgent father to hasten to his villa at Newport, and open its elegant doors for one of those magnificent and costly entertainments which disseminate the tidings of great wealth more effectually than individual rumor. Her greater discernment taught her that this lord would make greater sacrifices of his personal liberty for lucre than for beauty. "Miss Delano is too refined," she argued, "to make display of her wealth, and thus I shall dazzle his lordship first. Let her bait for him with beauty and style! I will fling in his eyes gold-dust." This youthful schemer despised humble birth with the persistency and sternness of Anaxarete. Flinging her opera cloak over an arm as round and fair as Haidee's, she gave one final adjusting fling to her skirts and announced her readiness to accompany her mother to the ball. It was high time, as the enemy already occupied the field, and her dancing tablets bore the register "Ld. Carnochan, Lanciers."

As Madame Harcourt and her daughter, escorted by an army lieutenant, entered the ballroom of the great hotel, two brilliant lines of couples extended down the floor, waiting for

the signal note of the marine band to advance *vis-à-vis*. Miss Delano, having finished her engagement with the English lord, had withdrawn from the floor, and was the central figure of a group at the right of the orchestra. A white camellia glistened in the heavy braids of her chestnut hair, and her illusion skirt, puffed to the knee, swept away in a long train to the floor. The upper skirt of illusion was looped at one side with camellias, and the under skirts of illusion and tarlatan gave to the whole its misty, billowy effect. Her white silk corsage, with puffings of illusion and a fall of *point d'Alençon*, bore also a white camellia, bedded in dark, shiny leaves of green. She was talking with animation to her circle of admirers, among whom was conspicuous the English lord. It was by no means an established certainty that this nobleman was not as susceptible to the power of simple beauty as other men, if one might judge from the rapt gaze he cast upon those sloping shoulders and that neck of swan-like grace. But when she turned upon him those matchless eyes in the interest of conversation, now sympathetic in appreciation of his remarks, and now expanding their dark pupils in brilliancy as some brief intensity of thought woke in her brain and gushed to her lips, he remembered the eyes of Haidee's mother: —

"But her large dark eye showed passion's force
Though sleeping like a lion near a source."

She turned from him to address Colonel Bufort, who had just presented his friend Captain Henry Ransom, of the navy. Then, after a brief interchange of inquiries with him regarding mutual friends who were absent from the ball, she said to the wounded naval hero: —

"I am always delighted to meet the members of your profession. If I were a man I should choose the life of a sailor, for not only can you cultivate to the highest perfection the accomplishments of the scholar, but you can enjoy frequent opportunities to visit classic and historic lands, familiarize yourself with monuments of past greatness, study the sea, the stars, and the storms, and at the same time never lose that fulness and activity of muscle which is the glory of manhood. Thin, wan scholars tire me. They are apt to tame and lose the vitality of manhood. Woman looks to man for protection, and admires the strong arm and the brave, free will. Have you ever tired of your profession, Captain Ransom?"

"Never, except in calms, nautical and political," was the curt response. At the same moment he bowed to a gentleman who saluted him in passing.

"That face looks familiar, Captain Ransom; who is it?"

"That is a very accomplished gentleman from your city, Miss Delano. I have met him in the Mediterranean and on the African coast. There is one of your scholars who is neither thin nor wan. His arm is like iron, and I know he is equal to fatigue and exertion of the severest nature. I have seen his qualities tested. His name is Earle,— Montrose Earle. You must have heard of the family."

Nothing but the wonderful self-command of the girl, and that instinctive tendency to avoid the sensational which patrician polish causes, prevented an exclamation. Though her eyes followed eagerly this stranger who had so long occupied her thoughts, she managed to reply with nonchalance: —

"I have heard the name. A wealthy merchant, I believe. His face betokens rare intelligence."

"No," was the response; "his father was the merchant, and died leaving the son a large fortune."

"An only child?"

"I believe so, Miss Delano. I never heard Montrose Earle mention any other children."

"A particular friend of yours, Captain Ransom?"

"No, only an acquaintance; which has never yet arisen to the dignity of friendship. But I know him well enough to present him to you if it would afford you any satisfaction."

"It would be bad taste certainly to decline an introduction to a scholar; but if you will allow me to take your arm, Captain, for a short walk on the gallery, I will be very grateful, for the air of this room is oppressive."

The officer extended his arm to her, and with a slight bow to the remaining gentlemen who constituted the group, the two moved slowly along the dancing hall as the advancing and receding figures of the dancers would allow their passage. Arriving at length at the grand entrance of the hotel, they joined the promenaders who had left the ballroom for a moonlight walk on the broad piazza. The night was lovely, and the slow pace and earnest countenances of some of the ladies indicated that they had withdrawn to the gallery with their gallants for other purposes than a breath of fresh air. Like spirits in misty white they moved along, their beauty purified and softened by the pale moonlight in their faces.

Miss Delano broke the silence: —

"I regret your inability to dance, Captain Ransom. But I am sure you possess resources enough within yourself to care little for this one deprivation, which I trust will not long continue. But no doubt in your many foreign adventures you have witnessed so much greater perfection and elegance in the terpsichorean art, that you care little for our formal dances."

"I am always interested in the pleasures of my countrywomen," was the gallant response; "and if all dance as elegantly as Miss Delano I should deem my experiences in that art abroad as eclipsed."

"Never mind the customary and gentle breath of flattery our sex expect, but consider all those pretty things as said and over with, and tell me some of your adventures in Spain. I came out here to escape such compliments, and if you wish me to esteem you, avoid personalities in my regard, and give me some bright pictures from your storehouse of scenes and adventures abroad."

The officer at once went on another tack, and in a few minutes found his companion as much absorbed in his conversation as the ladies in the gallery were in that of their escorts.

"I will give you," he said, "something more substantial, from my journal in Spain, than a narrative of dances and fêtes. If, as a true American woman, you aspire to literary cultivation and to a broad and generous appreciation of foreign lands, you will be interested in that development of literature which glorified the Saracen ascendency in the peninsula. By the way, this may not interest you, after all. Perhaps you have visited Spain."

"No," was the response, "go on. I have visited nearly every kingdom in Europe but that. That is a sealed book to me."

"Well," he continued, "I have visited nearly every public library of consequence in Spain, and in some of them, particularly in those parts which were occupied by the Moors, I have found data convincing me that the Arabs, during their occupancy of Grenada, attained a position of literary culture far in advance of Christian Europe. I do not mention this in derogation of Christianity or religion. You recall, no doubt, the fact that when the Jews for so long a period occupied the proud position of the chosen people of God, they were far inferior in the attainments of

literature and the advancement of the arts and sciences to the pagan nations around them. To be God's people, then, is not necessarily to possess the best things of this world. Christianity refines and cultivates, no doubt, but it is not the eureka of worldly attainments or benefits. Men who despise it ascend even now the highest pinnacles of scientific attainments. But, under the supremacy of the Arabs in Spain, the progress of elegance and culture, physical and mental, astounded Europe. This wonderful people improved the soil of Spain to a perfection which it has never since known. They divided the waters of rivers, and distributed them in channels over the country, and produced upon its soil fruits and grains from remote countries. I have studied the ruins of their splendid architecture, and marvelled at its elegance, durability, and beauty. I sat by moonlight amid the ruins of the palace of the Alhambra, that glorious structure which could contain thirty or forty thousand men. When the Moors held it, a wall encircled it that boasted more than one thousand towers.

"But when I studied, in the Escurial and other libraries, the historical records which indicated the intellectual development of these dark-visaged invaders, I was less disposed to go into ecstasies over the wonderful schools of my native land, and our moderate libraries. On the plain of Grenada alone were fifty colleges, and the most superb libraries were met on every side.

"There is one name, connected with the advancement of literature among this singular people, which deserves to be wreathed in eternal honor. Alhakem, employing his power and influence as one of their monarchs, collected from the remote corners of the earth tomes, scientific, historical, and poetical, and by munificent expenditures established a library of six hundred thousand volumes. From every quarter of the globe scholars crowded to his capital to contribute their literary offerings for the advancement of his people, and to share his munificent patronage and hospitality. The records mention, also, accomplished female scholars, who attained eminence in jurisprudence, philosophy, poetry, and theology. It was a brilliant reign, and its elegant influences passed down the ages."

Miss Delano stood at that moment leaning over the railing of the gallery, and looking upward towards the moon. Its soft, full light revealed her face, thoughtful, and in the

act of listening intently. Her imagination was at work upon the images called up by her companion's description. He talked on in low, musical tones, and she made no effort to interrupt him. Suddenly he paused and her castle in the air faded.

"Allow me to examine your fan, Miss Delano."

She was startled, but extended it to him without a word, and looked curiously at him.

Opening it, the officer held it up in the moonlight. It was of white silk, on a frame of delicately carved ivory. In the centre of it was a painting which he carefully examined, and then remarked: "It is exactly what I supposed it to be when you opened it in the ballroom,— Ibrahim Ebn Abu Ayub, the astrologer nodding to the silver lyre of the Gothic princess. You remember the legend, of course."

"Certainly; it is as familiar to me as the Legend of Sleepy Hollow. But is it not exquisitely conceived and finished? Notice the pearls in her raven hair, and the golden chain about her neck supporting the lyre, and the stars gleaming far away through the fissure in the cavern. It was a souvenir, painted for me by Pelazo, a Spanish artist, who was grateful to me for a slight service. But why did you pause so abruptly?"

He replied quietly, as he returned the fan, "It was one of those painful manifestations of female curiosity which disillusion us sometimes in despite of our desire to idealize all women. Some one paused behind us to catch the tenor of our discourse. Yonder she goes in pink and white. The gentleman with her remonstrated, 'No, no, I would not listen for the world.'"

Miss Delano glanced after the receding couple. The female was Miss Harcourt, and the lip of the heiress slightly curled, as she remarked, "I know who she is. The plebeian current in her veins must ever assert itself. But do tell me about that gentleman on whose arm she is leaning. He has a remarkable face. Is he one whom you would endorse as a desirable acquaintance? You called him Montrose Earle."

From the instant her eyes fell upon that short, compact figure in the ballroom, had she been contriving to lead the conversation naturally to a discussion of his character and history. For months had he been the subject of her curiosity. Night after night had she awakened with a start from dreams in which he reigned the central figure. Sometimes he stood

over her couch with gleaming lantern, demanding her instant surrender of the note signed with the mysterious initials. At other times, through ever receding halls and chambers, had his Napoleonic figure pursued remorselessly a glorious ideal of manly beauty and grace, whose career seemed ever beset with snares, and shadows, and pitfalls, and who ever struggled into life again, and majestically and proudly moved onward in renewed hope and energy. At other times, in waking intervals of the night, had she heard, through the partition wall which divided her sleeping apartment from the sanctuary of Montrose Earle, the low hum and click of miniature machinery, and at long intervals a jarring sound like that caused by the closing of a ponderous door. A fearful conviction that she slept every night next to the haunt of a successful murderer was constantly present to her. Towards him the repugnant instincts of her nature ever were alert. She had never looked upon his face. She knew him only from his miniature when a mere youth, and from the descriptions given by her neighbor, Mrs. Secor. Her imagination had conjured up his powerful, but not symmetrical frame, with its massive head and clear eyes of blue, his regular features, and his resolute but flexible mouth, showing dimly amid a mass of brown beard, oriental in luxuriance and neglected length, which flowed upon his bold, prominent chest with the freedom of a lion's mane, and the cleanliness of a *petit-maître.*

But now the hour had arrived when she might meet him. Every dictate of curiosity, every generous impulse awakened in behalf of the outcast and beautiful Constant who haunted her dreams, but was a pure myth to her daily life, prompted her to accept an acquaintance which might eventuate in the discovery of the truth, and the eviction of the unjust. Would not her female tact elicit clues from his unwary language? Was there no weakness in the career of a successful villain, no opening crevice for the wedge of intellect, that constant study and observation might disclose? She had pondered these questions long. They arose with renewed pertinency and force when the Rubicon of acquaintance rushed closely before her.

Chapter XXI.

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
TAMING OF THE SHREW.

"I KNOW nothing of the intrinsic character of the man. My associations with him have been conventional rather than intimate. He is brave, cultivated, and refined. That I can vouch for. I know several gentlemen intimately who would deem it their duty to deny any aspersions upon his character. I think I would be perfectly safe in stating that Mr. Earle is a proper acquaintance for any lady. I would not hesitate to introduce my own sister to him."

The last two sentences were uttered *sotto voce*, as the subject of the conversation was returning down the gallery with Miss Harcourt. When they had passed, Miss Delano resumed her inquiries: —

"Bravery prejudices me in favor of men. You have witnessed this in Mr. Earle, then?"

"I have seen him beard a lion, — a frantic, wounded lion of South Africa, — which is considered no trifling affair, Miss Delano."

"I imagine that to be as conclusive evidence of courage as any you could cite, captain; but tell me about it."

"It is what we sailors term a *long yarn*, and you are here for dancing purposes, I apprehend."

"Never mind the dancing; it is no novelty for me. Give me the story in all its fulness and detail. There are some chairs just vacated; let us secure them."

They moved along the gallery to the seats, and Miss Delano contrived to secure a position where her own face was in shadow, and her companion's in the full glare of the moon. The naval officer, fascinated by the loveliness of his listener, and stimulated by her earnestness, exerted his powers of description. There was just dash enough of gray hair through his black locks to suggest the veteran of seafaring life and adventure, and just spirit enough in his tones to arouse the romantic element in the girl's organization to the highest pitch.

"Imagine a great plain stretching away before you in the full blaze of an African sun, covered with grass and dotted

with occasional trees of lofty height, with dense, leafy heads. At intervals the plain was marked off into grassy fields by copses of the delicate-leaved mimosa, whose blossoms were golden-hued. The plain resembles a park bounded on the west by a lofty cliff, several hundred feet in height. On the east was traced in the distance a glittering thread of light, — the channel of a small river. From the very foot of the precipitous wall of rock or western boundary gushed a spring, whose waters moving quietly adown the gentle slope of the plain formed a few hundred yards away a miniature lake, upon whose tranquil bosom lay sleeping the blue water-lily (nympha cœrulea). Around the lake's border glistened the soft, slimy leaves of the silver-tree (Leucodendron argenteum). The slender stream which bore the waters of the lake to the far-off river was bordered by hedges of arborescent aloes, whose slim, spire-like flowers of red followed its course for miles.

"In a thicket a mile away to the south of the quiet lake a hunting party of foreigners were congregated, their horses secured to the low shrubbery, and their own forms stretched at ease in the shade, enjoying their meerschaum pipes, but carefully attentive to the occasional remarks one of their guides let fall from the top of a huge tree near at hand, where he was watching the plain with experienced eyes for a familiar signal. In the front of the entire group was Earle, standing beside his Arabian steed, and adjusting a strap which secured a robe of leopard-skins to his saddle. The horse was slight and elegantly limbed, but black as ebony. His fleetness had been tested on many an African 'Karoos.' His master was clothed in loose trowsers of dressed sheep-skin and a green velvet jacket with steel buttons. His hat was a broad Panama straw, and just below the top of the crown was wound with a veil of white muslin, giving it somewhat the effect of a light-colored turban. He claimed that this gauzy material best protected the head from sunstroke. His belt was a green silk sash, holding two revolvers and a long hunting-knife. His double-barrelled rifle, carrying a half-ounce ball, rested in a notch of one of the low shrubs. He was a superb horseman, perhaps more dexterous than any in the party.

"The Dutch *boor*, who was our guide, detected a white cloth waving from the thicket near the lake, and gave a shrill whistle from the tree-top. We were in our saddles in an in-

stant. The signal waved from the east side of the thicket had indicated that our game was between the lake and the river. Earle took command of the party who were to guard the shores of the lake, along which the lion would, if worsted, be likely to escape into the western cliffs. The rest of us, four strong, under command of Lord Clyde, a famous English sportsman, were to undertake the initial warfare between the lake and the river. Away dashed each party to its destination, the blazing African sun flashing from the barrels of our rifles, and the gallant steeds as wild with excitement as ourselves. Skirting the occasional hedges of yellow mimosa, and dashing recklessly amid the lines of the silver-trees, we were upon the lion sooner than we had anticipated. With a mighty spring (at a horseman who did not even see him as he sped by), which certainly covered forty feet of ground, he missed his mark and fell astern of the horse. He had made this leap from a thicket on our flank as we dashed ahead, and we had all passed him unharmed. He was evidently making for the lake, and in a few moments after we had wheeled we caught a glimpse of him skulking away behind a short row of trees in that direction. It was a fair rifle range, and we successively despatched four balls after the monarch of the desert. Every shot struck him; two of them, evidently, only grazed his back. With a scream of agony and rage he turned upon us, and leaped several feet into the air. Onward he came with terrific bounds, lashing his tail, and exhibiting his glittering teeth. His huge mane was black, indicating a species the most ferocious and dangerous south of the great desert of Kalihari. We fired our revolvers at him as he bounded towards us, but the terror of our horses prevented accuracy of aim, and our balls missed entirely or inflicted only flesh-wounds. We scattered then in every direction, spurring our steeds away to a place of safety to reload our rifles. The lion, having failed in his charge upon us, paused and looked after us as if uncertain which one to pursue. Looking backward over my shoulder as I bounded along, I saw him with mane erect, his tail lashing his flanks, and his mouth open in a frightful roar of rage and defiance. In a few rods we had gone beyond his reach, and, wheeling about, paused to reload. He was trotting away towards the concealed party on the shore of the lake. Our party were rather widely separated by his terrific charge, but were near enough to observe each other's motions in the act of reload-

ing. We shouted to each other in excitement and delight at the favorable opening of our sport, as we carefully charged our pieces preparatory to advancing to the assistance of our concealed friends at the lake. His tawny majesty had disappeared in the thicket. Presently a thin cloud of smoke curled away from the dense top of a large tree, followed instantly by the sharp crack of a rifle, indicating that our concealed *boor*, who had waved the white signal, had mounted to a place of safety, and was coming in for his share of the sport. A terrific howl ensued, and then the frantic bounds of the beast crashing through the bushes were distinctly heard. He had been struck by another ball. Scarcely had his roar died away in the distance when Lord Clyde shouted to me, 'Look out behind you!' I wheeled on the instant, and beheld a lion in the act of springing from his crouching-place. This nobleman had seen him making for my rear. My horse saw the brute at the same instant, and plunged frantically backward, and the lion struck the ground close beside his flank. I fired my revolver at his head, and the eyes suddenly closed, and, with a convulsive movement of his body, he fell over in the agony of death. That shot saved me for another sight of my native land. Lord Clyde came spurring gallantly to my assistance, but he was too late. I was the sole victor in that field. As we gazed upon the lifeless foe, in exultation over our success, the report of several rifles brought us to our saddles again. The wounded lion had crossed the path of Earle's party. We were in readiness for the pursuit and galloped away towards the lake. Upon reaching our friends we learned that Earle's rifle had broken the fore leg of the lion, who had gone off limping and howling towards the cliff. We felt sure of him now, and, the guns being reloaded, our united forces commenced beating the bushes to start him, for he had evidently skulked away to hide himself. Undoubtedly his cunning would cause him to lie motionless in the thickets, or cautiously to follow the protecting shadows of the aloes which followed the banks of the stream up to the spring under the cliff.

"Patiently and perseveringly we beat the bushes, skirted the lake, and commenced the gentle ascent towards the source. No lion was to be found. Unquestionably the wound inflicted by Earle in the leg had not been so serious. At length we reached the spring, issuing in crystal beauty from the rocks. We paused to slake our thirst, and then

examined the ground about us. Lofty as the blended spires of many cathedrals rose the sharp crags above us. The barrier to our further progress was effectual. For miles up and down spread the adamantine wall of rock. At this instant the quick eyes of Earle espied far up on the side of the cliff the tail of the lion just disappearing in a cleft of the rock. It was no doubt his lair. He must have given a leap of twenty feet almost perpendicularly upward to reach it. We had tracked the flying monarch of the desert to his castle, but who among the representatives of the human family at the base of the cliff possessed the hardihood to undertake that ascent to his silent presence? Who, indeed, was safe in remaining even at the base of the crag where so suddenly he might fall upon any of us? We withdrew, prudently, for consultation. After the discussion of several plans to oust the wounded beast from his retreat, Earle declared that he had come there to stop the breath of that lion, and he did not intend to leave without doing it. 'You have all killed your lion, at one time or another. Now I expect to win mine. I am going up that cliff to start him out. I think I can have a crack at him before he can spring. I believe I broke his leg, as I told you, and, if I did, there cannot be much danger.' Remonstrance was useless with a man of his determined will; and in a minute he had divested himself of his jacket, and with a revolver in his teeth he walked away to the rocks and commenced to clamber up the side by the aid of twigs and crevices in the wall. We watched him with our rifles poised and ready to concentrate our fire upon whatever might issue from the lair. He reached the summit and slowly raised his eyes to peer over the rock. To our amazement, he drew himself up to and over the landing-place and disappeared. Instantly we heard the report of his revolver; then a roar, rising in terrible distinctness over the plain; then another shot, and all was still. In another moment he appeared, and called to us, exultingly, 'I've shot a brace of them!' He disappeared, and in a few seconds more dragged to the edge and flung down to us the lamed lion and a lioness, both shot with unerring accuracy through the brain.

"When he had clambered down that cliff we dismounted, tied our horses, and, joining hands, danced around him, shouting, 'Kobaoba! Kobaoba! the monarch of the marshes, who fears neither man nor beast and chases the lion like a cat.'"

The officer paused, amused at his listener's rapt attention Her eyes glowed with the far-off light of a reverie, and the moonbeams gave to her neck and shoulders the hue of marble. She had scarcely moved in her seat. She was the impersonation of youthful ardor and romance spellbound in the knowledge of strange and thrilling adventure. And yet, through all her flattering attention to his words, the consciousness that he was describing the man so repugnant to her never left her for an instant. Could one so intrepid as to win the applause of men bronzed in the hazards and hardships of every clime be guilty of midnight assassination, craftily luring his victim under the endearing title of friend to a place where no hand could succor, and where no eye could witness the secret stroke? The characters were inconsistent. Courage stood high on the list of virtues she ascribed to ideal men, — true, earnest men, — men whom she could esteem, honor, love. It was a shock to her current of thought to realize that villains were capable of manifesting the most brilliant qualities; the heroism of the lion-slayer blended with the craft of the murderer! It was anomalous. There must be some mistake in her data, or else idealism was shaken on its throne. Could there be any injustice in her imputation of crime to Montrose Earle? Could any plausible explanation separate him from an act evidently committed in his private sanctum? Was not the note evidence that J. H. N. was lured there by Earle himself? Was not the infant Violet, her godchild, unmistakably of the Earle blood, and left at her door by the victim who had secretly been admitted at the adjoining house? Was it not the act of a fiend to suffer his brother and sister to starve when millions were flowing through his own hands? Her perplexities were increasing upon her. He was brave to a fault. How magnificently must have gleamed that fearless eye, raising itself to the level of the lion's lair! The heroism of her countrymen was typified in that hazardous ascent. Her suspicions of the man were faintly lulled, not dissipated. So surely does manly daring elevate its possessor in the eyes of woman! More earnestly now would she study the life of this anomalous being. She must accept the acquaintance. She must know more of him, — this gentleman who owned friends and supporters among the gallant and the refined.

With such reflections flitting through her brain, and such determination regarding the acquaintance proffered to her,

she heard the heroic narrative to the end, and then, at the sudden cessation of the officer's eloquent tongue, said, earnestly: —

"I am indebted to you for the most agreeable episode in a ball I ever knew. I should be honored by a call from you, during my sojourn in Newport. But the band has just commenced a polka, and I have an engagement. Will you be kind enough to introduce Mr. Earle, the lion-slayer? I think I should like to know *all* of that heroic party."

"Certainly," was the response of the officer, as he gave her his arm and conducted her to the presence of the assembly, who were already whirling in that dance known in the sixteenth century as the *lavolta*, and danced before Elizabeth by the gallant Essex and the fair lady Bridges, the star of the courtly circle.

> "And still their feet an anapest do sound;
> An anapest is all their music's song,
> Whose first two feet are short, and third is long."

Like the many-colored leaves of the autumn whirled by the wind sped the light-footed dancers, now circling away in detached couples, and again gathering in their flight in confused masses and rustling against each other as they turned. Scarlet and blue silk from the looms of Avignon and Lyons, white velvets from Lisle, tulle robes from Brussels and Portugal, and flounces from Chantilly and Caen, blended and whirled in the soft, misty haze of the gaslight. Diamonds and coronets, flower-wreaths and gems, blonde tresses and raven braids, advanced and retreated in dazzling confusion, but guided and spellbound by the notes of the orchestra, swiftly and clearly urging the feet of the dancers. But ever and anon, amid the circling forms of the light-footed and eager, glided one, the queen of the revel, the white-robed and beautiful belle of the ball-room, whose easy footfall and unstudied gracefulness gave her the title of "the brown-haired and elegant stranger." Her white slipper, slender and graceful as the sandal of Rhodopis, peeped from her misty robe, swiftly and dreamily timing the melody, poising and gliding and whirling in unison. Round in the misty light sped her slight figure with the lightness of Helena in the temple of Orthia.

Suddenly the music ceased and the poetry of motion was over. As she withdrew from the dancing-floor, upon the

arm of her partner, Montrose Earle, who had been presented to her, according to her request, drew near and accosted her.

"If Miss Delano were crowned with laurel, instead of a single camellia, she would properly typify Terpsichore."

The language and tone were as unstudied and courtly as the utterances of Sidney or Bayard. The clear, blue eyes were gazing in respectful admiration into her own. The long, silken, brown beard gave him the impress and dignity of a *savant*.

"Is it a compliment to inform a lady that she resembles a nonentity, something that never existed and never can exist?" was the response given in the softest of tones, and with the most superb nonchalance. His eyes brightened, and a smile played about that flexible mouth before he answered, in the same unruffled voice: —

"Those who are at a loss for a suitable earthly comparison are driven to create one."

Archly she glanced at him and said, "The heavenly host *are* entities. It is one of the prerogatives of women to be compared to angels. Is not that comparison forcible enough?"

Again that quiet smile, but masking this time a sting.

"Yes! woman has been entitled to that prerogative ever since the fall. From the moment she ruined him, man has called her angel."

Her eye dilated as she turned quickly to him. "No! the praise and exaltation of woman dates from the hour she bore a God to redeem him. Since that event man has called her angel."

"I am defeated, Miss Delano; I throw up my hands in token of surrender. You dance like an *angel*."

"*Now* I am satisfied, sir; nothing short of celestial and orthodox adulation will I receive. Please never to compare me to those pagan muses again. Do you dance?"

"I do; everything from the *medicine dance* of the Comanches to the Spanish *bolero;* from the '*German*' of Fifth Avenue to the 'Palicari' dances of an Albanian garrison. I have even followed the fleet conductress of the Grecian '*Romaika.*'"

"You are a traveller, then, Mr. Earle?"

"Yes, I have broiled in the sun of every land, and frozen in the air of every arctic region. I have slept under the

wadmal tent of the Laplander, shot bears as they rooted out truffles from the valleys of the Pyrenees, and squeezed myself for the night into an Amazonian *toldo*, thatched with the leaves of the *vihai*. I have chased 'snow bears' up the Himalayas, and dined off locusts in a South African *kraal*. I have killed snow-white egrets and scarlet flamingoes on the lagoons of Louisiana and captured the black-plumed 'secretary-bird' of the African desert as he flew off with a black naja, or 'spitting-snake,' in his beak."

"You must have collected a rare museum, no doubt, in your wanderings. I would give much to have a glimpse at its wonders."

"Nothing would afford me greater pleasure, Miss Delano. I pride myself upon its rare completeness, and am only too proud to admit ladies to examine it. I have in New York many curiosities, which you can see at any time. But the great bulk of my stuffed birds and my living reptiles are at my country-seat on the Hudson. Whenever you happen to be in the vicinity of Tazzleton with your friends, inquire for my place 'Silvicola,' and I will give you all a traveller's welcome."

How little dreamed the speaker of the invasion of his sanctum in the city, by his listener, and the odious comments there indulged in regarding his character and career! Like an avenging deity masked in beauty and shod in wool was the lovely woman beside him, weaving the toils for his destruction. Patiently was she waiting for the day when disguise should be flung aside, and, like the accusing prophet, she should stand forth and declare to him, "Thou art the man." His last words had already opened the door to his sanctum, to his country retreat, and to his confidence, for one who linked him with crime and stood as the self-constituted friend of the innocent and the suffering, watching for his moment of weakness, of self-betrayal, of ruin. She delighted in every word he was speaking, in every power and influence her beauty and her graces were exerting over him. She could scarcely conceal her exultation as she replied: —

"Are you, then, the hermit of 'Silvicola'? Why, that place is near my own summer-house on the Hudson. It is two miles further down the river and on the opposite side. I heard that a singular man had purchased it, who was a physician and a recluse, who never allowed a woman to

cross its borders. Are you a physician, and have you purchased 'Silvicola'?"

"I have the honor, Miss Delano, to be a humble follower and votary of the great healer, Serapis. I have stood on the site of the ancient Canopus, where that divinity had a sanctuary famous for its wonderful cure of human maladies. I *did* not purchase 'Silvicola.' It came to me as a part of the estates of my father. It was the old homestead. I simply changed the name, and christened it by the title you have heard. I do not think I am a singular man, according to your informant, though you *are* the first lady whom I have invited to cross my threshold. I have been annoyed at times by certain religious zealots, wearing the dress and having some of the manners belonging to ladies, who disturbed me in my studies and tormented me with solicitations to adopt one or the other of their religious systems. I am familiar with the distinctive tenets of more religions than they ever *heard* of. I have been and ever shall be an earnest inquirer after truth. I believe that I possess more editions of the Bible, rare and valuable, than any public or private library in America. Every Sunday I devote to a careful study of the Bibles, earnest, critical study, by the aid of commentators and my own investigations and travels. These women importuned me, exhorted me, lectured me, until I was obliged to close my doors upon them all. I am a student. I am entitled to quiet and scholarly retirement on my own domain. Hence, I suppose they style me hermit, perhaps even designate me as '*boor*,' '*pagan*,' '*infidel*,' Heaven knows what."

Miss Delano smiled and bowed to her partner, who resigned her to the physician, and went in pursuit of some other fair dancer. Then, seating herself, she said, "Poor man, I can sympathize with you indeed. You are right — clear off the whole tribe of women. Few of them can appreciate you or comprehend your researches. But you amaze me by your statements. That is your summer home, then? Have you fine horses on the place?"

"How unlike a woman!" exclaimed the doctor. "I took it for granted you would inquire if I had a female cook, or who made up my beds, or if I had any sisters or nieces to inherit my property after I had retired to the shades." . . .

Miss Delano laughed.

"That kind of information interests me little. It would

entertain me about as much as to know who chases Cerberus with a broomstick, when he steals a beefsteak from the grid iron of Pluto."

"Well, then," resumed her companion, "I will tell you about the horses. I have eight; four of them are aristocrats, and four work-horses, or plebeians. One of the first is my Arabian, Muslama. He was the gift of a sheik. His eye looks empire; nothing can beat him this side of the Atlantic."

The eyes of the lady beside him glowed like those of Agostina Zaragoz as she issued from the church of Nuestra Senora del Pilar.

"There is *one* horse that can beat him."

The words came from her lips quick, distinct, and fiery, causing the blue eyes and heavy beard to turn in amazement. "Ah! what may the name of that presumptuous brute be?"

"Warwick!" The name was uttered like an inspiration of prophecy.

"And you know this horse?"

"He is *mine*."

The spirit of emulation was mounting rapidly to her eyes and flushing her cheek. "I will ride him *myself*, and beat your Muslama."

"I never decline any challenge thrown to my favorite. He shall meet your Warwick, whenever and wherever you please."

"To-morrow evening on the West road?"

"Ay! to-morrow evening. A running race, of course!"

"Certainly!" was the instantaneous response. "I would undertake no other. I will run you two miles."

The physician smiled. "Remember," he said, "that you will compete with the wind of the desert."

She glanced at him haughtily. "Don't threaten Warwick." As she turned away to accept an invitation to dance, she bowed. And thus they parted.

"What a glorious eye she has!" thought the savant as he watched her receding figure. "Such creatures when tamed by love are very gentle."

Miss Delano's reflections at the same instant ran thus: "How I will take the conceit out of that man to-morrow! *Muslama*, indeed!"

Chapter XIII.

He is complete in feature, and in mind,
With all good grace to grace a gentleman.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

WHEN Miss Delano retired at a late hour from the ball to the summer cottage of her aunt, Mrs. Bristed, whom she was visiting, she found a letter lying upon her dressing-table, bearing a familiar handwriting. She reserved the reading of it, however, until her aunt, who had attended the ball, had withdrawn from her apartments for the night. That lady had mounted to her niece's room, as usual, to discuss, in dishabille, the events of the evening, and to aid in footing up the conquests made, and criticising the dresses worn. After expatiating upon the agreeable qualities of Lord Carnochan, who had devoted himself assiduously to her after her niece left the ballroom with the naval officer, she remarked suddenly: —

"O May, I forgot to tell you something that occurred in conversation with him. He told me that his object in visiting America was a peculiar one. It appears that a young gentleman, who is the son of a marquis, and I think he said a cousin of his, had quarrelled with his father and left England. He was very high-spirited and went off without giving his relatives any opportunity to conciliate him, and without even condescending to inform them where he was going. He was a young man of great promise, and has been gone from England several years. His father has recently died, and all his great property, I don't recollect how much, has been given to the son. But the young gentleman can't be found. They don't even know to what country he fled. Every effort so far, made to discover him, has proved a failure. I suggested to Lord Carnochan that, inasmuch as every newspaper advertisement had failed to secure any tidings of him, it might be well to announce it in the churches. You know he has been so liberal to our church in the city that it might interest people to inquire about the matter. I told him you would write to your uncle to mention it before the congregation."

"Certainly, aunt, what was the cousin's name?"

"Robert Melville," was the reply. 'Lord Carnochar expressed great affection for the young man, and said he had presented him, just before he left, with a splendid watch, having a miniature of himself in one of the covers, an elegant fowling-piece, and various other articles; and his cousin had not even acknowledged the receipt of them, but just cleared off suddenly from the country."

"I will mention it, aunt, to-morrow, when I write to uncle. Now, good-night, please, for I am very much fatigued. There is no pleasure in dancing in such a hot room."

When Mrs. Bristed had gone, the young lady substituted a silk wrapper for her ball-dress, shook out her hair, and sat down to the reading of a long epistle, traced in the most wonderfully minute handwriting. She was a picture, seated in her low chair, with dishevelled tresses, and the point of a tiny white slipper stealing out timidly under the hem of her blue silk robe. She had drawn near to her lamp to decipher the female hieroglyphics. They were interpreted thus: —

"DEAR MAY: — I have endeavored to discharge my duties as proxy to the best of my ability. Your Sunday-school class has thinned out a little during the excessively warm weather; and indeed I couldn't blame the poor little things for not coming so far in the terrible heat. Little 'Shorty' is very constant in his attendance, and his teacher informs me that he is learning fast. In fact, the poor cripple has manifested extraordinary talent and ambition. But I have an idea that your incentive about the horse has stimulated the boy more than a simple appetite for mental food. I saw him, a few days ago, loitering about your deserted stables, and trying to peer in between the cracks of the door. He asked me when your horses were coming back. His thoughts have a decidedly equine tendency. His Bible teacher was reading to the class about the heavens being opened, and a white horse appearing, and when he had read the verse, 'And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean,' little 'Shorty' startled the class by exclaiming, 'I know a bay that'll knock the spots out o' all uv 'em. He's got a white cover too, and there's a *D* in the corner. His name's Warwick, and he's a snorter, I tell ye.'

'I am going to Saratoga next week, as father is ready

now to leave his business. I will join you at 'Sublimity,' just after you reach there. I engaged Miss Griffin to look after your class during your absence. She will have the two classes sit together, so that she can superintend both, and keep them in order. That poor old woman that you have supported so long is dead. She instructed me to give you her blessing. Poor old creature! her gratitude brought the tears to my eyes. She was so demonstrative.

"You will be surprised at the latest *on dit*. That prince of gallants, Montgomery Sewall, is to marry Mary Bogart. Will you ever forget her appearance at the assembly? Mr. Cochran called once, and devoted the entire call to a eulogium of my friend 'Miss D.' I do believe the man will go crazy, when the last glimmering ghost of a hope has vanished. He found your album, and insisted upon writing in it. But I would not permit it. He then wrote these lines upon a sheet of note-paper, and laid them in the book: —

"'Remember me! Oh, pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline!
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be "to find forgetfulness in thine."'

"Poor fellow! he has gone out as Secretary of Legation to Vienna.

"Now, May, I am going to startle you with a romance in real life. You recollect how interested mother has been in Hester Lanly's case. She has sent me to St. Luke's three or four times to see her. Poor mother! you know how feeble she is herself, — so thin and pale that father meditates taking her to Germany for the waters. Well! I took some little delicacies to St. Luke's for Hester. You know how the poor old cook idolized all of our family. One afternoon, after I had been visiting her, I happened to meet, in one of the halls, Helen Blakely. You know what a celebrated nurse she is. After conversing with her awhile, she told me of a very interesting patient under her charge She said he was so beautiful and so elegant that her heart was touched every time she put eyes on him. She was certain he must be a gentleman, and she felt sure he had recently experienced some terrible revulsion of fortune. He appeared to be a very zealous member of our church; and she thought I ought to see him, as he had asked for books to

read, about which she knew nothing. He was convalescent; and she would, if I was willing, ask him for permission to introduce me. I accepted the invitation. You need not laugh, and think I went in because he was good-looking. I did not even think of that; but I knew that gentlemen have requirements in sickness that ordinary people cannot understand. Refined people value ladies' society and conversation and sympathy when they are helpless, and so I went in. O May! what a face! It was like a celestial dream; so pure, so noble, and yet so sad, so earth-weary. Would that I could cause eternal animation to that blonde beauty! Would that I were gifted with the power to wake at will the gleams of sunshine which danced in those eyes when a transitory emotion of pleasure and enthusiasm swept across them! Would that I could charm away the cloud of melancholy which has become their daily heritage! May, I have shed tears at the mere memory of that lovely helplessness. You cannot even conceive that matchless beauty. And, when I tell you he was emaciated, pale, his silken brown hair shaved as closely as a prison convict's, and his hands thin and white as snow, from sickness, and yet exhibiting their exquisite formation still, you can imagine what he was, what he will be when the results of his terrible fever have passed away, and he starts again to active life; a poetic, enthusiastic marvel of loveliness and manly grace; a brilliant intellect and a spirit-like face, both refined as if daily touched by the wings of Ithuriel.

"A mystery attaches to this ideal beauty. Every one believes he has not given his real name. He looks at times as if he might be proud as Lucifer. I am satisfied he is concealing everything of his real name and former circumstances from us. Who do you think, of all persons, brought him to the hospital but that peculiar woman, Madame Benon. She heard of him in some way, and rescued him from a garret where he was dying of brain fever. He has a great bundle of manuscripts in his room, that came with him, and he is frantic to write and add to them; but the doctor has positively forbidden it. He can sit up only an hour or two, and when he can get at a book he reads till he is dizzy. I took several books to him from our library, and you should have heard his comments upon the chapters I read to him. He criticises closely, but how magnificently he appreciates! and often adds something of his own as brilliant

as the original. The doctor is fascinated with him. He has read medicine and everything else, and the doctor says he is one of the most cultivated scholars he ever met. I heard the doctor tell him one day that he was certain now of his entire recovery if he would not study. With the sweetest smile I ever saw he reached forth his emaciated but beautiful hands to the physician, and with a rich, deep, melodious voice repeated the words of Hassan: —

"'Lord of the palace of life, — thou before whom the angel Azrael spreadeth his wings for flight, — thou, wiser than Solimaun Ben Daoud, upon whose signet was inscribed the *Real Name* which controls the spirits of the elements, — forbid it, Heaven, that while thou travellest upon the track of benevolence, bearing healing and hope wherever thou comest, thine own course should be saddened for lack of the tale and of the song. Behold, while thy servant is at thy side, he will pour forth the treasures of his memory, as the fountain sendeth her stream beside the pathway, for the refreshment of him that walketh thereon.'

"O May! such a grateful, exultant, touching music was in those tones that the doctor's black eyes filled with tears. He is just the man a woman would follow to the ends of the earth. I never had the depths of sublimity and beauty in my organization so aroused as when I heard that marvel converse. He is in the flower of his manhood. Imagine large blue eyes, brilliant and almost black in moments of enthusiasm, magnetic in their influence, irresistibly leading you to share his convictions and his ardor. Then a soft, hazy brightness settles in them as he listens to you, and you feel that in that gaze he is really fathoming your sincerity, your true nature, and appreciating all the beauty and purity that exist in you. He impresses you with his truthfulness, with his ardent and poetic temperament, with his unsullied honor. I would trust him without hesitation. I never yet came in contact with another man upon whom I could so blindly rely. I believe association with him would develop all the good in an unprincipled woman's nature. He is ever appealing so quietly, so naturally, so gently, to the best and purest impulses of the human heart. As you study him, you realize that his ardent impulses may lead him sometimes into error. He *may* fall, but oh, how rapid would be the resuscitation to his primitive life! His true and real nature is buoyant like a life-preserver; pressed for

an instant by a heavy weight under the waters, it springs upward quickly to the surface and to a view of God's sun and stars. Evil cannot hold him under long.

"He has baffled every effort to trace his origin, to identify him with any family, to gain a clue to his past. I understand that no friend has come to him in his misfortune except one. It was a lady, who solicited and obtained private and confidential interviews with him several times She was very elegant in her manners, it is said, and he seemed to be very much attached to her, giving her manuscripts to carry away with her, and apparently bearing some relationship to her. It was suggested that she might be his wife. But I know she is not, for he informed me casually one day that he was not married, and his word bears to me the impress of truth. There is an elegant *hauteur* about this gentleman that repels idle curiosity. There is a limit beyond which he is inaccessible. Do you know what a singular impression has taken firm hold of me? It is that this stranger and your little godchild are very much alike. The resemblance in the eyes and mouth is particularly striking. I wish you could see him. Do you wonder that I have devoted so much space to a poor invalid in the hospital? You will not if ever you see him; that is, if I understand correctly your tastes.

"Do not let many days elapse before I hear from you. Direct after this week to me at Saratoga. Tell me about your pleasures and your beaux. You see that I have made a double request. The two are not always identical. Good-by, dear May.

"Your friend ever,

"Carrie Deming.

"P. S. — Sister is having her blue silk made and trimmed with white cord, — gored, of course."

The letter dropped into her lap. She folded her hands over it, and sat for a long time in perplexed study. At last he was found. After all her patient watchfulness, all her inquiries, all her anxieties, which had brought no clue to the mystery, he had been accidentally discovered in a hospital. There was no doubt in her mind of the identity. This poor, emaciated being conformed in every particular to the image her imagination had conjured up. The physical and the intellectual parts alike corresponded with those of

the ideal that had haunted her so long. The hand of her charity had been stayed by the decrees of an all-wise God The proud heart had been humbled to the very dust. The sensitive nerves had been strained to their utmost. The generous heart had been almost crushed in the iron grasp of despair. And yet he lived. He was convalescent. The star of his destiny lifted once more above the huge waste of sable clouds. It was faint and dim. Still it was there, and it was a star. It was no ignis fatuus. He had gone down deep into the dark valley, but the angel of life had met him and turned him back. He had struggled and gasped in his agony. He had suffered shame and desertion. No one had stood by his cross save only a woman. No doubt that woman was his sister. Thank God! he had a sister to cheer him, when all the gay companions of his life had fled, when the desolation came, and the painful choking at the throat.

Why did she pity him thus? He was a stranger. Her eyes had never looked upon him. Ah! the human heart is not bounded in the range of its sympathies by the visible. As true and bitter tears have been shed at the story of Calvary by strangers as by those who stood at the foot of the cross. The human family is linked from pole to pole in the sympathies of the heart and the understanding. It is the pledge which binds the buried nations to the men of the present and the hereafter, this unity of the human race in heart and feeling. But there was a finer and more delicate explanation still, why this high-born and gently-nurtured girl turned so often to the contemplation and the pity of this fallen being, this prince of the social circle, who had been hurled from the heaven in which he moved, as low as Apollo from the Olympus of his father. There runs through the intricate meshes of the human heart a current, subtile, defying analysis, and yet alive and active ever. In unexpected moments, in the camp and the court, in the palace and the cottage, in the church and the ballroom, in every haunt of life, its influence is experienced. Instantaneous as the lightning flash it meets the secret current of another heart. No word may be spoken, and still on the instant springs to existence a sympathy, a confidence, a trust, which the storms of life may not beat away. Miles away in the distance a student pens simple words, and when the type and the press have given them to the world, a few hearts only

understand them, a few lips only murmur, "I know you though I have never seen you. At my side your life would flow on with no discordant jar, for between your heart and mine, your tastes and mine, your idealism and mine, there is perfect harmony." A young man is a mystery in the midst of his family. They cannot comprehend his tastes, his current of thought, or his religious sympathies. To them he appears like a sceptic; he appreciates not their religious convictions or their manner of expressing them. He lives a life apart by himself; every word and every idea they utter seem to jar upon his nerves and give him pain. Soon an orator of the pulpit appears upon the scene. A wonderful unction follows his discourses and every heart is touched. All acknowledge his purity, his earnestness, his power. And yet under every discourse, or threading it like a wavy line of fire, is a hidden meaning which none comprehend, ay, more, do not even see. And yet that line of fire has touched the heart of that young man, and its hidden mysteries have opened its avenues to truth. Between his soul and the soul of that orator is a sympathy so subtile that few can comprehend it; and yet that sympathy can bind the hearts of preacher and hearer into a spiritual and a worldly friendship which no hand can sever and no will shake. For the good of that youthful soul the influence of that orator is all-potent. The same delicacy of thought, of conception, of sympathy, binds the two forever. This mystery runs through every life, and its marvellous developments will never cease. The entrance of some persons into a drawing-room fills others there, who are strangers, with a nervous repugnance, an undefined uneasiness, which no tongue can explain. The entrance of others, equally unknown, causes a congeniality of feeling and a sympathy equally mysterious.

The sympathy of May Delano arose from the contemplation of a painting. The artist had faithfully sketched the features and the princely bust of Constant Earle. It was enough. In most women it would have aroused admiration. With her it did more. The cast of the features, the curve of the passionate and delicate lips, the misty, dreamy beauty of the glorious eyes, and the poetic symmetry of the forehead and every feature, truly and forcibly uttered their own mystic meaning to her heart. They spoke to her clearly and forever: "God has made his heart and his soul beautiful beyond the mass of warm hearts and gifted souls.

Keenly as the steel of Damascus do beauty and knowledge flash to his brain and his heart. God shield him from the agony and the temptation which poverty entails upon the poet and the scholar!"

She sat long communing with herself and with the silent night. Through the open window peered the sinking moon. It was near the dawn of a new day, and yet she could not sleep. With earnest, thoughtful natures a powerful reaction follows the excitement of a brilliant entertainment. Eagerly and in response to some unnatural craving of their hearts such persons seek the haunts of frivolity or gayety, and wildly, recklessly, participate in their Babel of confusion and mirth. But, when all is over, when the lamps are quenched and the false brilliancy vanishes, when a mental analysis of the pleasures of the night is inevitably made, the heart finds itself weary, dissatisfied, and craving still. At such moments what would not the true woman give for one earnest, manly declaration of love, one sincere manifestation of that passion for which nature has so eminently qualified her, and in the enjoyment of which only can her heart be satisfied! The world imagined, from the persistency with which May Delano discarded all offers of marriage, from the quiet and uniform manner in which she converted all lovers into simple friends, that she was too aspiring to yield to the simple dictates of the heart, and sought an alliance in which her ambition alone would be gratified. And yet how unjust, how utterly unfounded was this conjecture! She craved love in its simple, unselfish earnestness; for it she would have sacrificed and suffered. When she took from her table the records of the past, and realized the intensity of that passion with which some hearts had been thrilled; when she discovered that in the furnace of suffering and despair love had been born, so pure, so elevating, so noble, that men had been baptized into a new life through its baptism of fire; that in the agony of their yearning and their hopelessness they had dragged their bleeding hearts before the altars of God and entreated him to sanctify their intolerable anguish to his honor and glory, — her eyes flamed with strange light, and with a frantic yearning to be thus loved, she had bowed her head in silence and solitude. Her passions were all strong, her idealism exalted far above that of inferior intellects, and she sought or hoped in the future for a noble idol, worthy of all devotion, and answering to this yearning madness in her heart. But so keen

was her gift of insight that she read most men as she would read books, analytically, thoroughly. She detected, under the elegance and the guise of passion, the scheming heart and the crafty, persevering ambition which sought her beauty and her wealth. In every instance had her judgment been justified by the result. In every instance had the baffled suitor sought other alliances, dictated by ambition and selfishness. It was not such love the proud, flaming heart of May Delano craved.

As she sat pensive and alone in her chamber, the words of her friend burned into her very soul: "A brilliant intellect and a spirit-like face, both refined as if daily touched by the wings of Ithuriel." Could this gifted being be selfish like the mass of his sex? She would have given all her wealth to know that his heart was untrammelled, his motives simple and pure, and his life Christian. How could she know this man; how naturally gain his friendship and confidence and determine for herself these questions? There was no love in her heart, only the craving to love and to be loved. Should she sit passively down and trust to fate to bring her one she could love; or should she seek an acquaintance with this gifted outcast, and with every other man of sense and feeling that might pass under her observation? There must be one somewhere in the broad earth who could love her really and truly, and for herself alone. How naturally and simply was this queen of fêtes and ballrooms debating these frequent questions which every woman addresses to her own heart! One would scarcely realize that a girl so courted and admired, combining the beauty and elegance of Isabella with the decision of Beatriz de Bobadilla, conversing with the ease and polish of Lady Montague, and dancing with the sylphlike grace of Barbarina, could ever lack the worship of one true man. And yet "the heart knoweth its own bitterness." The idols of society are not often worshipped by the heart. The incense which floats through their temples is born of fashion, frivolity, and self-interest. And yet beneath the garlands which crown these idols are scheming, aching brains, scheming to gain one precious draught of earnest love, to wring from the lips which flatter them that simple and sole ecstasy of life, "I love you." Too often are the wealthy "bankrupts in friendship and beggars in love." Could those who charged her with ambition have known that proud, imperial girl; could they have gazed into the secret purposes and longings of

that burning heart, they would have found powers of endurance and sacrifice for the sake of love like those which drove the Princess Amelia to mutilate her eyes and beauty for a lifetime. "Now I will not wed the King of Denmark! now I shall never marry."

She sat long in her room planning how best to bring succor to this struggling child of genius, how most appropriately to win the acquaintance of one who interested her so deeply and whose pride she hesitated to wound by any precipitate offer of assistance. No doubt the manuscripts mentioned by her friend were the pages of a future book, — a very natural expedient to earn bread on the part of an educated man turned destitute upon the world. How happy would be her fortune if he would allow her to advance the means for its publication! The whole matter was involved in perplexity, and she turned it over in her mind, studying what properly as a single and youthful lady she might do, and what propriety forbade. The presentation to young and struggling men of talent of pecuniary assistance was no novelty to her. The brightest pages she turned over in the book of memory were those where stood the record of her charities. But now, unaccountably to herself, she experienced timidity, hesitation, and uncertainty of purpose. She could decide upon no definite plan in regard to this stranger. At length she withdrew from the window as the moon dropped behind the western horizon. Her purpose was formed to return to the city and have an interview with him. She would go in company with Carrie Deming to the hospital and make his acquaintance. That was to be the preliminary move of her plan of operations. Should her interview confirm the statements of her friend's letter, then would she proceed to afford him secret encouragement and aid. Some pleasurable emotion was aroused by the consideration of some particulars of her plan, for when she had arisen from her knees, after her accustomed committal of herself to the guardianship of her God for the night, she laughed aloud.

"If I am successful, how Carrie will laugh! It will be a rôle unparalleled in history. Garrick will be eclipsed." With these reflections she fell asleep.

Chapter XIV.

What dares not Warwick, if false Suffolk dare him.

KING HENRY VI.

A SON of the Emerald Isle, hatless, coatless, with his blue cotton overalls secured tightly about his loins by means of a leather strap, with the sleeves of his check shirt rolled up above the elbows and exposing the muscular proportions of his bronzed arms, stood with a sponge in his hand before a row of stalls. The stable was large and airy, and he was contemplating the work he had just completed. Two black steeds with glossy coats and drooping tails were quietly feeding from the manger. He had sponged them down after their exertions abroad in the hot summer air.

"That'll do for yer honors, the sicond-class gintry," he exclaimed, after a brief survey of the carriage horses. "Now for a turn with that wild divil yonder."

He flung away his bucketful of dirty water, and, replenishing the pail from a hydrant in the stable, entered a third stall with the exclamation, "Stand around, ye divil, till I cool ye off."

The equine tenant of the stall, at this command, cleared off to one side to give him space to enter. The groom, dropping the pail near the manger, proceeded to pat the horse on the neck soothingly, and to carry on a conversation with him.

"Ye're a beauty, and ye know it, — don't ye now?"

The horse nodded assent.

"Proud as a paycock of yer tail, — aint ye?"

The graceful head responded again in the affirmative.

"They can all bate ye travellin though."

The horse gave a decidedly negative shake to this derogatory assertion. The Irishman laughed as he proceeded to soak the sponge in the water. Then, before applying it to the sides of the horse, he indulged in further conversation.

"Ye throwed me, ye divil."

The silent affirmative nod instantly followed.

"Would ye do the like ag'in?"

The horse shook his head.

"Give us a shake of yer fist thin, and I'll forgive ye."

The steed lifted one of his slight forelegs and extended it in amity towards the groom. The Irishman gave the hoof a hearty shake, and then the limb fell back to its place.

"Faith, an I belave I could tache ye the intire catechism if they'd give me time."

The equine conversationalist, being so intimately connected with the Church of England, prudently remained silent. He declined theological controversy or instruction until the arrival of his mistress, the high-church Miss Delano. So he gave his head an upward toss, a kind of silent and haughty *n'importe*.

When the operation of a thorough cleaning and rubbing-down had been accomplished, the groom concluded to lead his "Imperial Highness," as he termed his charge, out from his retreat, and give the stall a thorough cleaning and a fresh carpet of straw. As the thorough-bred stalked out into the brighter light of the open stable to be secured to an iron ring in one of the upright timbers of the wall, the sunbeams revealed a glossy coat of a dark hue, inclining to a chestnut-brown. He belonged to the class of fleet steeds known on the turf as the "English Hunter," a strain of horses secured by blending with the best English stock the blood of the long-winded, light-footed, silken-coated Eastern courser. He bore evident marks of his aristocratic descent from the "Godolphin Arabian" stock, which furnishes the famous steeds for the St. Alban's steeple-chase, or a run with the fox. The clear and wide jaws, the large nostrils, the broad, thin shoulders, the long thighs, the muscular and deep chest for the play of the lungs, the short back, the large and wide ribs, the clean bone and sinew, large and strong, the tail coming out high and stiff, the well-spread gaskins, and the hind-quarters lean and hard, — all attested the dash of that blood which gained the "Derby" for Saltram, Diomed, Spread Eagle, and Sir Harry, and won the "St. Leger" for Rowton, Margrave, and Barefoot. His whole bearing indicated strength without weight, indomitable courage without false enthusiasm or fire to waste his energies, and headlong speed without labor. But occasionally a light glimmered in his large, lustrous eye, which indicated mischief when he might be pressed too rudely, or suggested the sudden development of unknown powers under an unusual strain. He manifested all the proud blood, strength, and executive force of the great baron for

whom he was named. Over the pavements of Fifth Avenue, the smooth "McAdam" of Central Park, the dusty earth of Harlem Lane, or the mountain roads of her country-seat. "Sublimity," he had borne his mistress, proudly, swiftly, and surely. He knew her voice and obeyed it. He knew her footfall, and turned to receive the caress of his queen.

As he stood there chained to the iron ring, in all his majestic beauty, and no doubt wondering at the long time consumed in the preparation of his stall, a female appeared at the door of the stable, and called earnestly for "Mike! Mike!"

"Why in the divil don't ye come in, and not be standing there howlin' for Mike?" was the response.

"I'm afraid of the horse; he's just before the door," replied the girl.

"Botheration to ye! do ye fare the horse will ate ye like a peck of oats? Come in, ye fool! He's gintle as a lamb; he's the very sowl of gintility. He's a rigilar gintlemin; come in, I tell ye."

Thus encouraged, the maid crowded in between the horse and the wall, and made for the stall.

"Miss Delano says she wants Warwick in the best of order by five o'clock this evening. She's going out to ride."

"And is that all? Did that bring ye?" was the curt response.

"No, that *aint* all. She wants you to go out with the horse on the West road till you come to the split elm; she said you would know the very tree."

"Faith and I do,—the very identical elum, where that divil tossed me into the ditch and lamed me two nays for a week he did."

"Well, she wants you to ride the horse from that elm on for two miles just as fast as he can go. She wants him to know the ground, and she wants you to put him to his speed, for she's goin' to ride with a gentleman that says he's got the swiftest horse in this country."

"A race, is it!" exclaimed the groom, firing up in an instant. "Be gorra, Warwick'll surprise the sowl out of the man that attimpts that same. Is it racin' wid me mistress he'd be? There's not the man a livin' outside o' the ould country as can bate Miss Dillano."

"Well, that's all," said the maid, and was turning to per-

form a second time the feat of slipping past the horse, when the groom called her back.

"Who's the gintleman, and who's the horse?"

"I think the horse is named Muslama. I don't know the rider."

"Mooshlama! that bates me ould grandmoother! Fat a name to run agin a Christian gintleman, like Warwick! All right; till her I'll be there be the help o' God. It does me sowl good to haar the likes o' that; fot a batin' she'll gin him!"

The afternoon sun was still glaring upon the fronts of the shops and dwellings on the eastern sides of the streets, as a horseman rode slowly out of Newport, taking a westerly direction. He reined his steed closely into the shadow flung upon the street by the line of buildings on the west, and rode easily along, with a straw hat shading his features, and occasionally smiling as his ear caught the exclamations of admiration and surprise elicited by the wonderful beauty of his horse. It was a milk-white Arabian, with mane long and rather scanty, and a silken sweep of tail that occasionally stirred the dust of the street. The ears were small and exquisitely pointed, giving him great expression. His shoulders, light and flat, sloped backwards, and his withers were fine and standing high. The loins were short and straight, and the flanks and ribs round and full. His haunches were strong and elastic. A connoisseur might have detected too great length of croup. He exhibited thighs well turned and rounded. The tail was placed high, and the legs were clean and turned in perfect lightness and beauty. The feet appeared too small to satisfy the taste of an American jockey; but then he was a courser of the sandy deserts. This satin-coated, thin-skinned, flint-footed pride of Arabia swept slowly and proudly along, occasionally arching his neck at the sounds on the street, or curveting slightly at the glimpse of little ragamuffins running athwart his course. Ladies ran to the windows to catch a glimpse at this rare beauty, and one little girl shouted at an open window, "O mamma! here's an angel's horssy." The rider smiled at the compliment to his steed, and raised his hat to the child. Then, at a foreign word of command, the Arabian quickened his pace with the ease of an arrow sped from a bow. Gaining at length the open country beyond the town, his quick ear caught another brief word of

excitation from the lips of his master, and he sprang forth with the suddenness of light, skimming the highway with the velocity and effortless sweep of a shooting-star, small puffs of light dust curving after the dainty touch of his hoofs, and pebbles flying from them with a faint click against the rails of the bordering fence. Onward and still onward he flew, the rays of the sinking sun glistening across his satin coat of milk-white hue, and his eyes, so long familiar with the unbroken view of desert plains, flaming onward in search of the bold rival who dared to dispute his supremacy on the surface of the spurned earth. Thus flashed the Moslem steeds of Khaled upon the outnumbering ranks of Moseilma, the false prophet, trampling them to dust and leaving ten thousand dead upon the field.

The rider yielded a free rein to his favorite courser, and held his seat with the immobility of Saladin. He was dressed in a light suit of gray, which exhibited to the best advantage the short, compact symmetry of his frame, and the broad outlines of the shoulders and arms which had carried him safely through so many encounters with beast and savage. He possessed the cool judgment, quick eye, and world-wide experience that qualify men for success in action. No menace or entreaty could divert him from a purpose which his will had announced. He had frequently escaped the imputation of obstinacy merely from his wonderful success. He was of a serious turn of mind, which at times manifested itself in the melancholy of his fine features. He seldom displayed buoyancy of temper, and enthusiasm rarely clouded his judgment. His eye now roamed over the country ahead with the calm, clear, confident assurance of success. He had at once recognized the superiority of his competitor above the ordinary run of fashionable female society. Nevertheless it was not for an instant to be admitted that she could equal any qualities or attainments of first-class men. He fancied much pleasure would attend upon a well-directed effort to subdue her pride, intellectual and physical. His ability to triumph over the first was, to his mind, omnipotent. But, to subdue the latter, experience was required. Many important items of information were lacking. It was essential in the first instance to know upon what strain of horse she relied. He had, however, never been beaten in any brush upon the road, and there was little

likelihood that any girl living could on the best of horses even "*crowd*" Muslama, the invincible.

One cause of anxiety, however, was suggested to him as he flew along. It related to her ability to control her horse, when Muslama should be in full flight. The influence of speed is contagious, and Warwick might undertake to run away with her. He quailed at the thought of injury to his fair rival. He was already deeply interested in her. But all apprehensions were soon lulled by the interest excited by the appearance of Miss Delano, whirling up in front of the split elm which had been selected for the tryst. It was evident at a glance that she rode with the confidence and ease of one familiar with the field. His experienced eye informed him, moreover, that her "mount" was one of the best saddle-horses ever backed. But, beside his "wind of the desert," what could a woman hope to accomplish, where gallant male riders had signally failed? Concealing his emotion of triumph at the easy victory his maturer experience in horse-flesh informed him was in store for the Arabian, he reined in his courser beside her, and, gallantly raising his hat, said, "You are the soul of punctuality; pardon me for allowing you to precede me here. Your horse is magnificent."

"Of course he is," was the proud response. "I would ride no other."

Miss Delano wore a dark riding-habit, and a small straw cap with a dark plume. She could not restrain an expression of admiration at the exquisite symmetry and grace of the Arabian.

"I recognize," she said, "the gifted denizen of the desert. It is the finest of that class of thorough-breds I ever saw. I am truly glad you brought out your *best*."

The last sentence contained the faintest dip of satirical confidence. It annoyed the listener. She did not appear to be the least overawed by the manifest superiority of Muslama's breed. "You've something yet to learn, my fine lady," was his secret reflection. Then, as some faint curiosity to learn how familiar she might be with an animal that was his delight and constant study, influenced him, he inquired, "How old is your horse, Miss Delano?"

"That is a matter upon which I am not clear, sir. If you have any means of informing me correctly I should be thankful to you to let me know it. I know that he is more

than five, but how much more I cannot tell. The equine authorities upon whom I rely for much are at loggerheads. He was my father's favorite, and I would like to know all about him."

"I am happy to be able to serve you, even in so trifling a matter, Miss Delano. Is that your servant yonder?"

"It is; — shall I call him?"

Montrose Earle signified his assent, and when Mike bounded up to them on one of the raven-colored carriage horses, he directed him to take the bridle of the Arabian until his mistress could be assisted to dismount. The young lady, detecting his purpose, said quickly in her unanswerable tone of authority: —

"No, thank you; I prefer to attend to my own dismounting myself."

Sooner would she have presented that man with her steed than have descended into his arms in alighting. Her purpose in seeking his society was purely to re-establish the right upon its throne; not to enter into that familiarity which permitted touch. She instantly reined her horse up to the belt of open grass beside the fence, and, disengaging her stirrup foot, turned squarely in her saddle and sprang lightly to the ground. With the bridle over her arm she awaited the movements of her companion. He looked annoyed at her refusal of assistance, but, handing the bridle of Muslama to the groom, he went to her side and said: —

"Now give me your bridle and I will show you how to tell the age of a horse." She relinquished it to him, and he immediately unbuckled it, and secured the horse to the fence.

"In the first place, there are six nippers or cutting teeth in front which anatomists call *incisors;* there is a tush on each side; and there are also the molars or grinding teeth. These nippers are covered with an exceedingly hard enamel. This enamel not only covers that part of the teeth which rises above the gums, but passes over the top of the tooth, bending inward and making a little pit or hollow. The inside and bottom of this hollow becomes blackened by the animal's food. This blackness is denominated the *mark* of the teeth. This mark, by the wearing down of the edge of the tooth, gradually disappears and gauges the age of the horse. Now let me show you the teeth of your horse." He grasped the jaws of Warwick and wrenched them open

Then, after a brief examination of them, he pronounced the age to be *six years*.

"You see the *mark* on the central nippers is worn out: the elevated enamel edges of the teeth have been worn away and that same wearing away has carried off the black holes in the centre of the teeth; that is to say, *the mark*. In a colt the mark is long and narrow, but gradually grows shorter, wider, and fainter. His nippers, which at first have a cutting surface, in time wear to a level. When he is a year and a half old, his incisors will be flat. At two years of age a fifth grinder will appear. And so for each year there are manifestations in the wear of the *mark* on the nippers, the development and rounding off of the tush, and the changes in the corner teeth. Your horse is six, and consequently has what is termed a perfect mouth. The teeth are all produced, fully grown, and have not been injured materially; the tush has attained its full growth, an inch, and the end of it is a little curved. His third grinder is up, and the grinders are all level. If Warwick was seven, not only would the mark in the central nippers be worn out, but it would be wearing away also very fast in the corner teeth, which you see it is not with him; the tush would also be rounded at the point, at the edges, without and partly within also. If he was eight years old, the tush would be rounder in every way, and the mark would be gone from *all* the bottom nippers. After eight years, jockeys look to the nippers in the upper jaw, which retain *the mark* longer than those in the lower jaw. Do I make it intelligible to you?"

"Perfectly," exclaimed the young lady, who had taken every glimpse into her horse's mouth that his restiveness would allow. "You are a wonderful man, certainly."

"Not at all, Miss Delano. These signs are known by every *genuine* horseman in the land. Efforts have been made to deceive on the part of the jockey by what is called 'bishoping.' That was the name of the inventor, — Bishop. He cut with an engraver's tool holes in the teeth, and then burned them with a hot iron to blacken them. But no thorough student of a horse can be deceived. They never can imitate the irregular look of the cavity, the stain around the tushes, and such signs well known to the expert. Are you satisfied with my rude explanation?"

"I understand it sufficiently, and now realize the meaning of the proverb, 'Never look a gift horse in the mouth.'

I am much obliged to you indeed. Shall we have that run now?"

"Certainly, if you still fancy your English horse can compete with my monarch of the desert. You probably were not aware that I obtained my courser in the nursery for the whole world of fleet horses."

"What will you give me if I beat him?" she asked, glancing archly at him.

"His own beautiful self," was the fearless response.

"That is a prize worth contending for," she exclaimed in glee. "Mr. Earle, Muslama is mine."

"Never!" was the calm reply. Then he added, "But I ought to claim some guerdon if *I* win. Make me an offer."

"My glove," was the dignified response, given with the condescension of an empress.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Earle, "Muslama will fly as he never flew before, Miss Delano."

"If you win, you shall have my glove. But win you *never* will."

She took the bridle from his hand, as he detached it from the fence, and at the conclusion of her sentence led her horse close to the rails, and mounted by their assistance to her saddle again. Adjusting her riding-habit and securing a firm seat, she turned out into the highway, saying:—

"Now I am ready for you. Shall Mike give the signal?"

"Yes. Go ahead there a hundred yards, and wave your hat when you think we are ready."

The Irishman rode off in glee, and Earle sprang to his saddle.

"What is to be our reaching-post, Miss Delano?"

"The sign-post in front of the 'Traveller's Home.' You know the spot?"

"I do; now I am ready."

The Arabian stood motionless as marble, in the highway, but the "hunter" was uneasy. His mistress soon reduced him to comparative quiet. The hat waved, and they were off!

As they flew past the groom, neck and neck, he jammed his hat upon his head and spurred on after them, muttering, "The pagin beast travels like the divil. But wait fur the last mile, and ye'll see Mike Delaney appinted groom of that pagin white bird. Hoora! hoora! I'll bet me sowl

on Warwick. Hoora! She's ahead on the rise alridy, and now they're vanished. Bad luck till the hill that spiles me view." The son of Erin was right. Warwick led to the crest of the gentle hill, and then both vanished behind it in a cloud of dust.

Down the gentle slope, like the sweep of the wind, flew the gallant steeds. Skilled in horsemanship from his earliest youth, Montrose Earle had encountered his equal at last. For the first half mile Warwick led by a length, and with apparent ease. Onward and swifter sped the thorough-breds, their hoofs rumbling together over a little bridge which spanned a stream, and then all sound was lost in the sand of the highway. But when Miss Delano had gained a mile of the distance she saw a white head and neck pushing ahead beside her. Clutching her reins with a firmer grip, and compressing her lips in resolution, she flew on. One brief word of encouragement escaped her, and gave Warwick a fresh impulse for flight. The white neck disappeared, and then the white head dropped behind her. The movement of the Arabian was beautiful. No convulsive effort, no apparent strain of his energies, but one even, continuous gliding motion, like the sweep of a bird through the air. Closely and steadily he clung to the flank of the "hunter," spurning the sand behind him, and bearing his calm rider onward with the assurance of destiny. Montrose Earle noticed the convulsive spring of Warwick, when his mistress ejaculated the word of encouragement, and a smile crossed his features. He felt confident then of his success. Muslama squandered no power in convulsive efforts, but held steadily on.

A mile and a half had flown backward beneath their hoofs, and the outlines of the "Traveller's Home" loomed up ahead. Muslama pushed on inch by inch until his head was again visible by the mistress of the bay. Onward they flew, till the white, graceful neck passed up beside the neck of Warwick. They were even now, for the first time since the start, and the blood of both was up. With wonderful unanimity of powers they rushed onward, side by side, neck by neck, and head by head. No advantage was gained, no false step made, no rider discouraged for an instant. The goal was approaching, and the will of each competitor sprang to the eyes in a flash of confidence. A hoarse, impetuous word of command broke from Earle, and the Arabian shot ahead a length, a length and a half, and dashed madly on

The color deepened in the cheek of Miss Delano. Her eyes dilated in the brilliancy of excitement, and the words burst from her, "*Now*, Warwick!" At that command the head of her favorite gave a dozen convulsive plunges through the air, his hoofs rattled beside the flank of the Arabian, he glided for an instant beside him, his head shot past the breath of the courser's nostrils, his tail swept the white fore-leg in passing, he left the astonished Earle behind, and with fearful leaps spurned the earth, whirling a dense cloud of dust into the air, which soon enveloped him, and in which his magnificent onward sweep was lost to view. Through a blinding whirl of dust the steed of Earle darted past the reaching-post, the loser of the race by full three lengths. His astonished ear caught the announcement from the piazza of the hotel: "By Jupiter! the girl has it! the girl has it!"

Chapter XV.

Go ask his name. If he be married,
My grave is like to be my wedding bed.
ROMEO AND JULIET.

MAY DELANO stood on the front steps of her uncle's residence in the city. She had spread her parasol against the morning sun, and was awaiting the coming of her uncle, who had gone back into his study for letters which he had forgotten. She was robed in white, with black belt and neck-ribbon. As her eyes roved up and down "the avenue," she saw a stranger approaching, whose fine figure and firm, manly tread at once attracted her admiration. He was tall and elegantly limbed, and moved with the ease and precision of Lamoral, Prince of Gavre. As he drew nearer, she observed that he was very fair, and that a mustache curled away from his lip. He had the chivalrous bearing and imposing exterior of an officer of cavalry; such a figure as she had often encountered among gentlemen of that branch of the service. So imposing and attractive was the style of the pedestrian, that she stole from under the rim of her straw hat a full view of his countenance, as he passed her uncle's

door, without attracting his notice. She discovered in that glimpse that he was deadly pale but radiantly beautiful, with eloquent eyes, and genius stamped unmistakably upon his features. A thrill of admiration and surprise held her spell-bound. She looked eagerly after him, until his superb figure turned a corner and was gone. The ideal *mens sana in corpore sano* had vanished from her sight. It was Constant Earle. The one full, clear view of his face in passing had instantly revived the memory of the portrait. She recognized the resemblance instantly, and the real image of the disowned was indelibly photographed upon her brain. The half had not been told her. The portrait had not flattered him. The language of her friend's letter had been tame. The fearful fever had left him terribly pale, but had spiritualized his beauty. In the broad glare of the summer sun the dream of beauty had passed by. Was it not a dream? She turned to reassure herself of her consciousness. It was no dream. There stood the ancient house of the Earle family. Here was the home of her uncle. In a moment more the Reverend Thomas Delano would appear to accompany her. Where? To a hospital, for the relief of an invalid, an outcast, almost a beggar. Why did she not rush up the steps and hasten the tardy feet of the clergyman? The object of her intended charity had just passed. He was gone. He might be overtaken. Why did she stand so immovable, so bewildered? The opportunity of serving him might be passing away forever. Where was he going? There she stood, propounding these mental interrogatories, until the subject of them had vanished, and she could not move. She was paralyzed by his beauty, his elegance, his aristocratic, princely bearing, which no poverty could eradicate and no misfortune bend. The blood of the racer is refined and his beauty intensified from his lineage; the acumen and power of the scholar is traced as a rule to the same source; the finesse and comprehensiveness of the statesman's intellect and the manners of the gentleman follow the same law, and the judgment of the broad world sanctions the belief. The race of statesmen and scholars often, by the infusion of blood from an inferior class, gains qualities of force and will which have been weakened, and thereby is the stock improved. The Anglo-Saxon steed, by the importations of Roger de Belseme from Spain, received those splendid qualities which secured the victory on the battle-field of Hastings.

The Barb of that peninsula gave to the heavy and laggard steeds of England their supremacy. The blood and cultivation of his ancestors gave to Constant Earle the external graces and finish of his person. With him intellect was hereditary too, and upon him depended the problem whether that intellect should be frittered away in idleness and sin, or should mount beyond the attainments of his fellows and vindicate the claims of his class.

These were the reflections of the orphan, as she gazed after him, and recognized the elegance and refinement of manner which had been his birthright. How instantaneously with the realization of his style came the apprehension of wounding him by the offer of assistance! His pride would be galled by the mere idea of such an advance being made to him by a woman. She was enabled to ask counsel by the reappearance of her uncle.

"He has just gone by," was her exclamation. "It is no use for us to go to the hospital now. I shrank from speaking to him."

"Is it possible? Did you know him?"

"Only from his resemblance to the portrait. I have no doubt of it. He answered perfectly to Carrie's description too. O uncle, he is superb! He recalled to my mind Milton's description of Adam:—

> "'For contemplation he and valor formed,
> His fair large front and eye sublime declared
> Absolute rule.'"

The clergyman smiled at her earnestness. "One would think you were eulogizing a lover, May, rather than describing a stranger from the hospital, with whom you have never spoken."

"No," she replied, with a laugh, "it is honest admiration, unbiased and spontaneous. You should have seen him. But what shall we do now?"

"Continue on to St. Luke's, of course," was the response. "That is the only place we can hope to gain any knowledge of him or his whereabouts. But how was he dressed?—comfortably, neatly?"

"That is the strangest part of all. His figure and walk were so striking that I never remarked his dress until he had passed. Then I saw that his garments were fearfully plain and worn, but he had such a cleanly appearance that one

would know he was a gentleman. Come, let us go on, for I have much to attend to before I leave town."

They proceeded on up the avenue in an opposite direction from the one Constant Earle had taken, and the young lady entertained her uncle, as they walked, by an account of her acquaintance with the elder brother, and the circumstances attending the transfer of Muslama to her own stables. The clergyman listened to the recital, and then shook his head dubiously.

"I question," he said, "the propriety of your allowing that man to follow up the acquaintance with you. From your own description of his character I fear he is a powerful and crafty intellect, and, though his social position is unexceptionable, you may receive detriment from the tongues of others by an association with him, when, as you say yourself, you are shocked at the idea of yielding him any of that encouragement which the association of a young lady with an unmarried gentleman presupposes. I appreciate your motives, and share your suspicions to a certain extent. But, my dear niece, be careful. Society is a cruel and stern watcher, and we must avoid even the appearance of evil. I would not, for the world, have society know that he gave you that horse."

"If society had seen the expression of his eye when Mike seized the rein of Muslama and led him off to aunt's stable, society would hardly have pronounced it a gift, uncle."

"Was he much excited, May?"

"Not at all; he has the coolness and self-command in misfortune of La Vallette. I could only detect his annoyance in the gleam of his eye. His words were courteous, when I knew his heart was furious. He relinquished his beautiful Arabian to me with these words: 'It is an honor to be defeated by so lovely and accomplished a lady.' That makes me fear him. A man so thoroughly master of his passions under defeat is likely to be even with one some day. But he is very intellectual, uncle; he has the culture and versatile genius of Misitheus, and his travels and explorations have secured him a collection of medals worthy a compartment in the cabinet of M. Eckhel. You recollect how intensely interesting to me was that fine collection during our stay in Vienna."

"Certainly I do. But what do you glean from this man regarding his religious convictions? That is often a key to

a man's real character. I cannot divest myself of the prejudice, liberal or illiberal, that the men who recognize an overruling God, cognizant of every human action, and rewarding the good with the same persistency with which he punishes the evil, are the men alone to be trusted in the affairs of life. My trust in human nature is not bounded by the limits of the Christian nations. Other people believe in God and recognize his judgments. But unless a man acknowledge the Supreme Being I cannot trust him. It seems to be an inherent principle of my organization so to believe and so to limit my confidence."

"I know this of Mr. Earle, uncle: his mother was a devoted member of our church. Carrie informs me that Constant Earle is also a member. I know nothing regarding Mr. Earle's religious faith, except that he expressed to me his belief in one true God, possessing, as I understood him, the same attributes that we associate with the Divinity."

"That is decidedly in his favor," exclaimed the clergyman, evidently mollified by her reply.

"I know, moreover, that he studies theology, analytically and fairly. But one who penetrates the secret mysteries of all the religions of the globe will inevitably discover fragments of truth, great and holy counsels, and admirable rules of life in many of them. Mr. Earle gave me this item of his research which was new to me. The ancient Egyptians, according to his investigations, held a doctrine similar to our doctrine of the atonement. Osiris appeared on earth for the salvation of man; was overcome by death, or the evil principle, Typho; rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and then became the judge of men after death. He was the greatest of the Egyptian deities, and his career was strangely analogous to that of Christ, of our revelation."

"I am aware of that belief of antiquity, May, and that his sepulchre was held in veneration with an ardor and fascination like that which haunts the sacred places of Palestine. It was stated to be on the island of Philæ, and there can be seen the ruins of their temple in the Ptolemaic style of architecture. Savans conjecture that the Egyptians knew of the Jewish expectations of the coming of our Saviour, and adopted that incarnation of the Deity as a mystery of their religion. Others maintain that this belief was a spontaneous growth of the Egyptian intellect. I should like to form the acquaintance of this gentleman myself. Learning will ever

gain my respect, and while, by an acquaintance with him, I may obtain possession of historical information which my duties will not permit me to trace out, I may at the same time solve religious difficulties for him. I may aid you, also, in your purpose. But be careful, May, regarding a marked intimacy with him."

"I will never have intercourse with him, uncle, except in the presence of others."

"That will do very well, May. Don't we turn down this street?"

"Yes. We have to pass that row of new buildings, and then turn into those open lots. I am sorry I did not send for a hack, it is so warm. It is a nuisance having one's horses in the country, sometimes."

The two moved on slowly towards the scattered tenements of the poor, which had been erected as temporary habitations on the new streets cut through the solid rock by speculators, who anticipated in a few years to behold palatial residences covering the entire space northward to the boundaries of the Central Park. After traversing several partially finished rows of brick and brown-stone residences, and penetrating several dirty lanes leading past the shanties of the poor, they reached a one-story tenement perched upon the summit of a rock covering about an acre of ground, and destined some day to be the site of an elegant block of houses. The straight line of the new street leading into Fifth Avenue had cut away the rock before the very door of this tenement, and there stood the shanty perched upon the edge of this artificial cliff, with the doorsill not more than three feet from the edge. One careless step in leaving the door of the tenement would precipitate the unlucky pedestrian down upon the new street below, a distance of some fifteen feet. There had the unfortunate "Shorty" fallen one dark night, and fractured his leg. It had been amputated above the ankle. The mission of Miss Delano and her uncle at this time was in behalf of the little cripple. Circling about the rock by a tortuous and narrow path, they slowly ascended towards the shanty, and approached it finally in the rear. Turning the corner of the house, they stood upon the narrow plateau before the door, and rapped upon the whitewashed panel of the entrance. A pig, that was enjoying a promenade upon the summit of the rocky lot, had followed them around the corner of the house, and stood for an instant with his snout elevated

towards them, and evidently snuffing the quality of the strangers. This brief inspection did not please his porcine majesty, for, giving an emphatic snort, he reversed his course and trotted away around the corner. At this instant the door was opened by a girl in a calico dress, with dark eyes and hair, who might have seen sixteen winters of poverty and privation. She had a face wonderfully prepossessing for one in her situation, and the tidiness with which her coal-black hair was arranged and the cleanliness of her simple attire attested that no poverty or misfortune could eradicate from her recollection the scriptural injunction regarding decency and order. She recognized Miss Delano, and, with evident embarrassment, invited the two to enter. She gave them two rude chairs, the only seats in the house, and then passing quickly across the floor closed the door of a tiny bedroom. Miss Delano saw at a glimpse that the bed was occupied, but her attention was immediately engrossed by a boy lying under the window, with his elbows resting on the floor as a base of support for his cheeks. He was intently occupied in the perusal of a book lying open upon the floor before him. The palms of his hands were pressed over his ears, so that he did not observe the entrance of the new-comers.

"'Shorty,' get up! here is Miss Delano!"

The command of his sister was unheeded. He read on. The girl passed across the room and shook him. He turned and ejaculated, impatiently, "What do you want?" At that instant he saw the strangers, and scrambled up by the aid of the wall. He snatched his crutch from a hook in the window-frame, and hobbled across to the side of the visitors.

"I hear you have been a very good boy and followed out all my wishes," said the young lady, pleasantly. "Shorty" grinned in combined pleasure and embarrassment, but remained silent. Miss Delano continued: —

"I have determined to give you employment, as I promised you, about my stable."

The eyes of "Shorty" sparkled with joy. "I'll work ever so hard; indeed I will. This leg aint no 'count to hurt my workin.' I kin sweep and everything. W'en'll I cum, Miss Delano?"

The young lady opened her purse and handed several bank-notes to the boy's sister.

"I wish you to purchase 'Shorty' some new strong clothes and a cap, and have him ready by next week. I will

send my servant down to the city for him. I am going to have him with me in the country, and I intend to keep him occupied about my stables there. I will bring him back to the city upon my return in the fall."

"The country!" ejaculated the cripple; "oh, how nice! I never seed the country." The boy leaned upon his crutch a moment in bewilderment, and glanced from face to face to reassure himself that the matter was serious. Then, as the full realization of what was in store for him swept like an avalanche of delight upon his brain, his lip quivered and a tear glistened in the dark brilliancy of his eye. It was too much for the little fellow. The country, the bright, beautiful country that the boys had told him of, with its forests and trout brooks, its birds of every color darting through the trees, its long stretches of green meadows, its chestnut and hickory limbs where gray squirrels whisked their bushy tails as they leaped from tree to tree, the bees culling honey from flowers of every hue, and the song of the reapers as they wandered through the golden grain, the red and yellow apples thumping to the ground as nimble feet stamped upon the branches, and the rattle of chestnuts and walnuts as they fell upon the crisp leaves of the autumn, — all passed before the eye of the crippled boy grown pale and haggard in the heats and stenches of a great city from his infancy. It had been his dream of fairy-land. Eagerly had he treasured up every word of description given by the little urchins of the beggar fraternity who had drifted from time to time from the country into town. And now that he was learning so rapidly to read, every book seemed replete with pictures and scenes of country life. He could hardly realize that his cup of joy was soon to be so full. He contrived to stammer out his thanks, and then stood poised upon his crutch studying the face of the beautiful lady, — the angel who had come so unexpectedly to open for him the gate of Paradise. He hobbled after her to the door, and watched her descend with her companion the shelving rock to the street. And, long after her white dress and graceful figure had vanished in the distance, he stood bareheaded in the sunlight with his fingers clutched firmly to his crutch, peering after her, and whispering through his tears which came convulsively, "The country! the country! Oh, I'm goin' to the country! I'm really and truly goin' to the country. Aint that jolly?"

Miss Delano and her uncle traversed the district of the

poor until they reached Fifth Avenue. The heat was growing intense, and when they were passing the site of the new Roman Catholic cathedral, whose white walls glistened painfully in the sunlight, they were fortunate enough to discover an empty hack driving down the avenue. Hailing the driver, they soon secured his services for the remainder of their journey, and reversing his course he drove them on to the Hospital of St. Luke. As the façade of that noble charity at length rose distinctly before them, the heiress remarked upon the image of St. Luke in a niche above the entrance: —

"Uncle, I believe St. Luke was a physician."

"Yes, an eminent member of the medical fraternity," was the response. "St. Jerome declares his conspicuous talent, and St. Paul indicates that he continued in the practice of medicine after he had assumed the ministry of the gospel. He won distinction also as an artist. The Menology of the Emperor Basil extols his proficiency in painting. Nicephorus and also Metaphrastes mention that he left paintings of Christ and the Madonna. Theodorus Lector, in the year 518, asserts that a picture of the Virgin from the pencil of St. Luke was sent from Jerusalem to Pulcheria, the empress, who caused it to be hung in the Church of Hodegorum at Constantinople. One of his sacred paintings was placed in the Burghesian Chapel in St. Mary Major by Paul V."

"I have often wondered, uncle, why, in stained-glass windows and ancient engravings, St. Luke is represented with an ox or a calf standing beside him."

"The reason of that," was the response, "is derived from the efforts of the ancient writers to accommodate the four symbolical representations in Ezekiel to the four evangelists. The ox or calf was an emblem of sacrifices. St. Luke in his Gospel dwells particularly upon Christ's priestly office. Hence the symbol of sacrifice."

"Was St. Luke a martyr?"

"The authorities are conflicting, May, regarding his death. St. Hippolytus states that he was crucified at Elæa in Peloponnesus. The African Martyrology of the fifth age styles him Evangelist and Martyr; St. Gaudentius of Brescia, St. Paulinas, and others, confirm this idea. But Bede, Ado, Usuard, and Baronius state that he only suffered much from persecution, and died at a very advanced age in Bithynia. But here we are at the gate."

Alighting, they passed through the grounds, ever preserving their neat and cleanly appearance, suggestive of health and comfort, and reached the main entrance. At the door they met the nurse to whose care Constant Earle had been so long entrusted. What was their surprise and annoyance to learn from her that this gentleman had just left the institution, nearly restored to health, and leaving no clue behind whereby his future home might be traced! He had manifested the most profound gratitude to all who had befriended him in his severe illness, and had particularly expressed a wish to know the name and address of the lady who had taken him from his garret in the height of his fever. But as that charitable personage had expressly directed that her name should not reach his ears, he had departed without learning the identity of his benefactress. He had carried away with him his manuscripts, and had left for Miss Carrie Deming a book, in slight acknowledgment of her kindness and attention to him. He was as absolutely lost again as if he had crossed the seas and penetrated to the heart of the Chinese Empire. His entire conduct in the hospital had evidenced his determination to remain incog.; and in regard to his future residence, aspirations and intentions, the nurse could afford no satisfaction to inquirers. The impression of Miss Delano, on the steps of her uncle's residence, that the golden moment for securing an audience was that in which Constant Earle was passing the door, was now confirmed. The disowned was lost again, for who can speculate upon the probability of meeting an obscure individual in the great metropolis, — one whose pride would generally withdraw him from the thoroughfares where his father and himself had been so well known?

After an unsatisfactory conversation with the nurse the two turned to leave the grounds of the hospital. Helen Blakely called them back.

"I have forgotten one thing. If you will wait a moment I will bring it to you. It is a book he left under his pillow. As you are so anxious to track him out it may help you; but I don't know as it amounts to much. Will you wait and see it?"

"Certainly," said the clergyman. "It may assist us Go and bring it, Helen."

The girl ran into the building on her errand. In a few

minutes she returned with a book. Upon opening it the Reverend Thomas Delano exclaimed: —

"Why, this is the property of 'Robert Melville'! Why, May, that is the name you gave me as the missing cousin of Lord Carnochan, the son of the marquis. This is the young man's property. It is the 'Christian Year,' with his name written plainly on the fly-leaf. This Constant Earle must be acquainted with him. Here is a clue to something. Look at it."

Upon examining it she discovered the name written plainly in pencil, and beneath it was traced almost illegibly, "Presented by his mother."

"No doubt he was acquainted with Constant Earle," she said. "He may have been on intimate terms. Upon no other supposition could this book have been in the possession of Mr. Earle. You had better notify Lord Carnochan of this discovery, and he will come on and trace the matter out."

"I will write to him at once. Helen, you had better allow me to take possession of this book."

"Certainly, sir."

"And, if your patient returns for it, send him to my house."

"Yes, sir. I will tell him that you know the parties, — shall I?"

"Tell him that a relative of the young man whose name is written here is anxiously searching for him to inform him of his heirship to a large fortune!"

"Oh, is that it? I shall remember that, sir. Fortunes don't grow on every bush. I'll tell him, sir, just as you say, sir."

"Take care of that book, May," said her uncle, as they walked away to the hack. "It is a slight clue, but may be the opening wedge to the whole affair. We have now a double incentive to track Constant Earle."

As the carriage rolled away homeward, Miss Delano recalled the conversation between her aunt and Lord Carnochan. Mrs. Bristed had informed her that young Melville, in his flight from England, probably carried with him an elegant watch and gun, the former having a miniature of Lord Carnochan in one of the covers. It was not improbable that, in the days of his affluence and prosperity, Constant Earle might have formed an acquaintance with and friend-

ship for the son of the marquis in his travels abroad. If they really were acquainted the discovery of the disowned might lead to the knowledge of Melville's lurking-place. In the midst of these speculations the carriage paused before her uncle's house, and she hurried in to make her preparations for a speedy departure to "Sublimity."

Chapter XVI.

Thus up the mount, in aery vision rapt,
I stray, regardless whither; till the sound
Of a near fall of water every sense
Wakes from the charm of thought: swift shrinking back,
I check my steps, and view the broken scene.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

Not a hundred miles from the city of New York the Hudson receives a small tributary, which was known in the early history of the State as the Sorrow Kil. That name is now obsolete, and the stream, which is flanked on either side by manufacturing establishments, bears a name too familiar to modern ears to receive mention at this time. Near the junction of this Kil with the river, a town of considerable importance has grown up around these mills. The stream for a mile back from the Hudson is nearly a due west line, and approaches the river by a series of leaps or falls, some of them as smooth and tame as the fall of water from a mill-dam, others foaming and fretting their way over ragged rocks, and terminating in whirlpools below. An admirable road has been constructed along the bank of this Kil, by blasting away the rocks, which in many places constitute the banks of the stream, and in some localities attain an altitude of thirty feet above the level of low water. Half a mile back of the town the Kil is shaded by dense masses of forest-trees, which find a soil for their roots in the crevices on the summit of the rocky banks, or jut from lateral fissures, and, at an angle of forty-five degrees, shade the traveller below. The farther the road leads to the westward, the higher grows the rocky bank, until at a distance of two miles from

the Hudson, the cliffs have attained an altitude of sixty feet above low-water mark, and the road has become the darkest and shadiest haunt that ever cooled and comforted a traveller in the sultry days of summer. Looking upward the eye sees only a narrow belt of blue sky frescoed with branches and leaves of oaks and maples, and looking downward at the left discovers the dark water of the Kil, now moving serenely and unruffled down its channel, and now broken into ripples by fragments of fallen rock in its bed.

At this point, and exactly two miles from the Hudson, a white marble milestone is erected on a projection or spur of the northern or right-hand wall of rock. This milestone is the terminus of the rock excavation for the highway. Abruptly the road turns to the northward around it, and, leaving the Kil, passes up a long but gentle ascent to the plateau on the summit of the cliff. Attaining the level at the summit the road continues on to the north and parallel with the Hudson river, leading through pleasant and carefully tilled farms and past the country-seats of several elegant families from the metropolis. But the instant the traveller reaches the plateau and the level road, he will discover on his left the entrance to a great estate whose southern boundary appears to run along the top of the cliff or northern bank of the Sorrow Kil, and whose western boundary apparently follows a mountain ridge parallel with the Hudson. Two objects will instantly claim his attention, — an ancient and venerable mansion with sharp roof and gables, and with its front to the south, and a fairy-looking bridge, far beyond the lawn of the dwelling and high in air, distinctly traced against the blue sky on the west, and spanning a chasm fifty feet in width, formed by the approach of two mountain cliffs which lean towards each other. So elevated are the cliffs towering upward in the distance, at least half a mile west of the mansion, that instant curiosity is aroused to know the reason of a bridge being erected at so great and dizzy an altitude on the very summit of the highest peaks in the range of mountains. The chasm spanned by the bridge is really a gorge caused by some volcanic wrenching asunder of one solid rock mountain; but in the distance the effect is that of two lofty and sharp-pointed cliffs, contiguous to and leaning towards each other. The slender bridge is so elevated and far away, and so narrow and devoid of railing, that it appears like one single stick of timber spanning the gorge, or

might more readily be suspected of being the trunk of a tree which had fallen across from peak to peak. The summit of each cliff is devoid of trees or shrubbery, but about one hundred feet below the peak each is belted by a forest of pine and oak extending entirely down to the base of the mountain, and continuing for a great distance over the plain towards the ancient mansion. Far away beyond the bridge, to the northward and to the southward, are traced the peaks of a mountain range, some of them foliage-crowned to their summits, and others with tops evidencing the destructive sweep of fires, where acres of leafless and half-burned trunks stand in desolation and ruin, giving a wild effect to the scene and a striking contrast to the lofty masses of dark-green foliage which robe the others to their tops.

After gazing upward to the bridge, and speculating in vain upon the necessity of its erection at so elevated a point, the stranger will turn to the contemplation of the park which surrounds the mansion on every side. From the antique dwelling to every point of the compass extends a meadow of fine English grass, dotted at long intervals with giant maples, some standing in solitary grandeur, and others clustered in groups. The park is a mile and a half wide to the dense woods which cover the mountains, and, along the highway northward, it extends a distance of two miles till it meets the division fence of the adjoining property, a summer retreat of a wealthy metropolitan banker. To the west of the mansion is a small lake fed by a stream which wanders slowly through the park, and finally vaults down the precipitate bank into the Sorrow Kil. The lake has a border of young weeping willows, and a boat painted scarlet, with a white belt around the gunwale, floats upon its bosom.

But the maple-dotted park does not indicate the entire domain of the proprietor. The limits of the estate include not only a part of the wooded mountains on the west, but extend over and beyond the Sorrow Kil, taking in not only the great and unproductive swamps on its southern bank, but also the fine timber land and the arable fields which extend beyond them, and which explain at once the propriety of the airy bridge which connects the estate divided by the Kil. At no other point is there feasible communication between the parts of the severed estate. The road up one cliff, across the bridge and then down the other side, is the only means of reaching the arable lands without traversing

fearful swamps apparently bottomless and abounding in dangerous quicksands. The severed mountain is the only dry medium of communication on the proprietor's domain. Beneath the bridge the chasm widens to the Kil below, where the waters foam and boil and dash in fury against the jagged and impeding rocks which have fallen into the chasm.

One bright morning of summer a boy stood upon this bridge and peered down over its side into the foaming waters below. It was a dizzy height, and he studied the wild and fantastic formations of the rocks with the wonder of youth and the pleasure of an appreciative nature. It was a marvel to him, so unused to scenes of grandeur, and so ignorant of the beauties nature had lavished upon his native State. He had approached timidly at first the edge of the bridge, where no railing or barrier had been erected for a spectator to lean over as he gazed downward. But a boy's heart is generally an adventurous heart, and he stood fearlessly at length near the edge, poised upon his crutch, and gazing down the gorge at the caldron of foaming, roaring, leaping water.

"By jingo!" exclaimed the little cripple, after a thorough scrutiny of the place, "they're bileing rocks in that pot; dinner'll be late when they're biled soft." Then, as his eyes discovered at one side a pool of water almost motionless in its rock-bound basin, he continued, "What a jolly place for fishin,' if there's any fish in thar!" Then, after a brief reflection he muttered, "And there's another 'if,'—if thar's any line that'll reach 'em."

He hobbled off from the bridge, and gathered an armful of fragmentary rocks from the cliff, and, returning to the edge, flung them down into the caldron. The answering splash was evident enough when the missiles struck the smooth water, but in the foaming centre of the stream there was no responsive sign. The duration of the rock's flight informed his eye that there was no feasible line within his present experience that would reach any lurking fish in the pools. It was manifest, moreover, that the perpendicular walls of rock, which guided the course of the Kil, presented no shelving steps which could conduct an angler down to within any feasible reach of the finny tribe.

At length his eye grew familiar with the details of the gorge, and he turned back from the edge of the bridge for new discoveries. He looked away over the country spread

out below him, and the magnificent panorama of woods and waters, meadows and farms, hills and valleys, would have accounted to a much older spectator for the rapt eagerness and silence of the boy. Half a mile away the park and antique mansion seemed to have shrivelled in their proportions. The maples had shortened, and the house was less stately, and the lake was a miniature pool, while the stream which entered and left it had dwindled into a narrow line of water, a flashing belt in the sunlight. The neighboring farms and country-seats had dwindled, and the far-off highways intersected each other like dingy lengths of rope. The line of the Sorrow Kil could be traced by its border of forest-trees onward to the town whose church-spires glistened in the summer sun, and away in the distance rolled the Hudson, broad, calm, and following the line of lofty hills, with sails dotting its bosom. The general slope of the country was manifest whereby all its waters fell at length into the river. Startled by the novelty of the view, he turned and gazed westward, and beheld only ranges of forest-crowned hills and burnt mountains in which the source of the Sorrow Kil was involved in mystery.

At this instant the clatter of hoofs sounded near him, and turning again he saw a steed climbing the ascent from the south, bearing a lady whose eyes were roving over the landscape beneath her. In a few seconds the hoofs boomed hollow upon the bridge in the centre of which she paused. Her cheeks were blooming with excitement and exercise. She occupied at that instant the loftiest site in her realm. It was the mistress of "Sublimity," upon the apex of her estate, surveying her all in one glance. A smile parted her dewy red lips as she caught a glimpse of a white object against the background of green meadow below her. The milk-white courser of the Arabian desert was quietly grazing in the park of "Sublimity." He had wandered off near the woods of the western mountain, and there moved in unrestrained wildness and beauty upon the domain of his conqueror.

"Shorty," she said, after a brief inspection of her realm, and pointing downward with the red coral handle of her whip, which she carried for ornament and not for use, "I want you to master that horse. If you will learn to ride him well, I will take you out to many places with me which you will like to see. I make calls on some of my friends

on horseback, and when you are a good rider you shall accompany me. Do you hear?"

"Yes, ma'am; I'm goin' to try every day. Mike put me onter him and gin us a turn round the barn-yard. He says to me, 'Go it, yer cripple;' and I did, I tell ye. Mike says a horse is better nor crutches."

She cast towards the unfortunate youth one of her sunny smiles, which attracted hearts as quickly as her *hauteur* repelled them.

"You are fond of Mike," she said.

"I am that," was the quick response. "Mike's got funny ways, but he's sound, I tell ye. Ye see he knows horses, and I knows spellin', and we 'greed to swop."

His mistress lost the last words as her eye detected dark figures on the lawn before the mansion, and she exclaimed, "Why, there are strangers, I believe! Shorty, have the Demings come?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am," was the response; "they cum afore I left; the old gentleman and his lady and her too."

"I must be off then," she said, and moved on, taking her course down the cliff opposite to the one she had ascended. Warwick picked out his way carefully among the rocky fragments which strewed the road, and soon disappeared with his rider in the woods which belted the mountain far below. His course now led under boughs of oaks and beeches, maples and pines, and birch and bass-wood trees, between whose trunks a road had been carefully cut. The descent was gentle from the point where the forest commenced gradually circling around the mountain on the northward until it reached the wooded plain. At the junction of mountain and plain a spring gushed from under a huge rock and crossed the path in a pebbly bed, whose loose stones crunched under Warwick's hoofs and discolored the crystal water as he passed. The way was now nearly a dead level, stretching off under the branches in a hard-beaten and well-worked road, and the horse started off in a brisk canter. The leaves nodded occasionally to the wind of their flight, and through the thickets on either side gushed the melody of the wood songsters. A hare, aroused from his lurking-place by the sound of hoofs, leaped across the road and was off for his circular race, and then a partridge rose with a startling and hollow drumming sound and sped away in fear through the wild wood. As the fearless rider bounded on along the forest

avenue her eye caught every dart and flutter of animal life, from the orange and black oriole, speeding amid the branches, to the quiver of the gray squirrel's brush, as he listened to the strange beat of hoofs and stood clinging to the side of some huge pine, and meditating a circular dash up to its impenetrable and secure summit of dark-green. She felt upon her cheek the cool and sudden air of a glen, down which she plunged, and rising beyond sped on through walls of rocks dressed in dark-green mosses, where the sound of hoofs was muffled by the luxuriant beds of the same growth directly athwart her way. Onward and still onward she bounded, the scene ever changing from undergrowth to cleared woods, from dry, leafy road to moist earth where some sluggish stream meandered, or some bolder rill fell into its rock basin with a purling melody. But over and around her at every bound the great trees spread their sheltering arms, and the sunbeams struggled feebly through their foliage. At length she reached an opening in the forest where the trees had been felled years gone by, and where the sunlight held sway. Here was a glimpse possible of her mansion with its broad gallery and its climbing vines. She saw it away off beyond the boundary of the forest, its ancient brick work and quaint chimneys showing distinctly over the meadows, and directly she lost it again in her onward sweep.

After a detour of another mile along a forest road she swept out suddenly in the open meadows of the park, and bounded along a gravelled road to the east side of her home. From the summit of the bridge mountain to her residence, she had traversed two miles of road, the major part of it a sunless ride. It was one of her favorite haunts, where solitude was ever secured, and where no strange face could startle her, as the track led over her own grounds. She was soon before the door, dismounted, and in the arms of Carrie Deming, her familiar.

Her friend was below the middle size, but formed with perfect elegance. She was a blonde with delicate features. The contour of her face was round, and her eyes were a deep blue, full of intelligence and spirit. Her cheeks were dimpled, and her ordinary expression was hilarious. Her bust was full, and her neck white and free from spot or stain as a snow-drift. Her silken, curly hair of light-brown was held with difficulty in the monstrous torture and confinement of modern fashion. Her waist was a dream of elegance, and her feet ludicrously

small. The only part of her *physique* which manifested luxuriant growth was her wonderful volume of hair. She had arrived far in advance of her friend's expectation; and now, robed like a sylph in white, rushed out to greet Miss Delano. She was followed at a slower pace by her father, a white-haired gentleman of sixty, who left his wife seated under the vine-leaves of the gallery; too helplessly an invalid to manifest hilarious greeting of her hostess. Mrs. Deming retained her seat in company with Miss Delano's relatives, Mrs. Allen and son, one a widow of forty, who had just abandoned her weeds, and the other, the sole heir to her property, a West Point cadet of seventeen, on his first furlough.

As the elegant horsewoman alighted upon the huge stone block which had been the starting-point of equestrians for several generations of the Delano family, and which tradition maintained had been squared from the identical bowlder upon which Captain Delano, of the Continental cavalry, in the Revolution, leaped his horse to cross a dangerous ravine in a charge upon English infantry crouching behind it, she was welcomed by a fervent pressure of Carrie's lips, and by another salutation gallantly pressed upon her cheek by the girl's father. As she relinquished the reins to the groom, and passed up the walk to the gallery, sandwiched between Colonel Deming and his daughter, that gentleman bent low and whispered to her: —

"*Mon ami est arrivé ce matin. Il promet de venir demain.*"

She smiled, but placed her finger upon her lips. Carrie caught the signal of silence however, and exclaimed: —

"It isn't fair, pa, nor polite either, to be whispering. You and May are always having mischief which no one else can share."

"Never mind, daughter, you shall know it all soon. I will state, however, for relief of all curiosity, that it is only a matter concerning one of May's admirers. No doubt in your daily cabinet counsels she will post you on such matters." The colonel laughed at the ball of curiosity which he had put in motion with terribly accelerated force, for if there is one subject to a girl's mind worthy of curiosity after her own personal affairs, it is to know the gentlemen who are smitten by the beauty of her friend. She restrained herself, however, from any further comment at the time, fully aware that May Delano's secrets would all leak out to her on some

confidential evening, no matter how sedulously they might be husbanded for the present.

But the subject of the mysterious whisper made his appearance sooner than Colonel Deming had anticipated. For when, at a later hour, the lamps were lighted, and several vehicles from the neighboring country-seats deposited their silk and muslin draped occupants at the door of "Sublimity," a gentleman sprang from one carriage, and escorted two married ladies into the drawing-room, one of whom presented him to the hostess as Captain Dumont. He was slight and short, with an elegant military bearing, and a long, curling mustache of brown hue, and eyes of blue, keen as Damascus steel. Self-possessed and brilliant, with the talents, audacity, adroitness, and poverty of Beaumarchais, he blended the courtesy and accomplishments of Crichton. He was the impersonation of gallantry and merriment *diabolique*. He was of good family in France, but his necessities drove him into the imperial army, where he gained distinction, and a sabre-cut across his throat, which was partly visible above his necktie. He chanced to be in the South during the rebellion, where his reckless spirit enlisted him in the Louisiana cavalry, and where he was fortunate enough to escape unharmed from his quixotic attempt to aid the Confederates. He had caught a glimpse of the heiress riding in Central Park, and had gained a summer residence with the Lagranges, in the neighborhood of "Sublimity," that he might secure a familiar acquaintance with her. In the brilliant society that ever revolved about "the beautiful aristocrat," it was an event to engross the attention of the whole company by the utterance of either wisdom or wit. But several times during the soirée Captain Dumont discovered that his remarks elicited the silence or laughter of every one about him. He was too refined to make himself conspicuous long, and turned away naturally, on each lull in the conversation, to some one else, or to a lower key. His insouciant references to foreign adventure, or literary celebrities of every land, attracted the notice of the hostess early in the evening, and when she had succeeded, at last, with the tact of true hospitality, in drawing out the peculiar excellences of each one's education, and seeing every guest unembarrassed and mated with those in conversation with whom there would be sympathy, she turned to the French officer,

who had just completed a duet at the piano with Miss Deming.

"Captain Dumont, I heard you remark that King Alfred founded the University of Oxford."

"Certainly, Miss Delano," was the answer, given with a slight foreign accent. "That admirable monarch was the scholar, soldier, and statesman of his age; no tongue ever vilified him, no historian ever imputed the slightest vice to him, and yet he was an ignorant youth, for he attained the age of twelve before he could even read."

"No doubt," said Miss Delano, "the confusion attendant upon the invasions of the Danes will account for this neglect."

"You are quite correct, I have no doubt," was the courteous response. "You certainly are right in this instance. But it is recorded by Asserius, of Minevia, and by St. Neott, King Alfred's counsellor, by whose advice he founded Oxford, and other historians, that this youthful neglect was followed by wonderful development of genius directly after. His mother exhibited to him and his brothers a book in Saxon verse, which should become the property of him who first learned to read and understand it. He, like many of the greatest lights of the world, loved poetry, and, hastening to his teacher, would not rest until he had learned to read it, and moreover committed it to memory. While still a youth, he committed to memory several poems. He was a scholar in those early days of England, and his acquirements are almost incredible when we recall his military career and his statesmanship."

"He was a jurist of no mean ability," interposed a prominent counsellor of the New York bar.

Captain Dumont turned graciously to the new speaker and bowed.

"The compilations made by Alfred, from the laws of Ina, Offa, and Ethelbert, to which he added laws stamped with the genius and wisdom of his own brain, assuredly entitled him to that distinction."

"I believe he also instituted trial by jury," interposed the lawyer.

"If I recollect, Judge Evans," said Miss Delano, "he was the terror of your profession. Captain Dumont, am I right? You see I appeal to your superior knowledge of the king you eulogize."

"Ah, Miss Delano, so elegant a lady is right. How do you say it, very right? no, *always* right; that is what I would say." He bowed before he continued. "King Alfred hung upon a tree forty-five judges in one year for sins committed in their official capacity."

This caused no little merriment at Judge Evans' expense, who took it pleasantly, however, and remarked, "Yes, that is historical. Milton says that in Alfred's time justice not only flourished but *triumphed*."

Mrs. Deming's emaciated countenance was beaming with interest, as she drew her chair nearer to this group. Her dark-blue eyes were brilliant, as she remarked, "This character will ever interest me intensely. His patronage of letters alone entitles him to the veneration of posterity. But when we recall the fact that every art and science flourished under his protecting influence; that he divided the yearly revenues of his patrimony among the poor, the ancient seats of learning, the monasteries, the schools of his own founding, and donations to foreign literary foundations, and caused the children of his nobility to be educated in his own court, and under his own eye, and, in addition to this, founded a navy and sent out ships to discover and report upon remote countries, we must honor him, and in the language of Campbell, 'confess that the age of Alfred was far superior in knowledge to those that succeeded it.'"

Chapter XVII.

What is social company
  But a babbling summer stream?
What our wise philosophy
  But the glancing of a dream?

C. P. Cranch.

All eyes were turned to this new speaker. It was manifest enough that she was not far from the border of the spirit-land. But, from the frail casket which still confined the spirit, pearls of memory and appreciation would drop from the heaped-up store. Her smooth, gray hair and ven-

erable appearance gave dignity and force to her words, and the light which flickered to her still expressive eyes memorized the days when, in beauty and intellect, she was a queen of the social circle.

Captain Dumont gazed for an instant at her, as she sat feebly in her arm-chair, and then said, in accents of the highest reverence, "You put us to our mettle, madame, to recall the characteristics of this wonderful prince. I have heard my mother often say that in her younger days girls of good family were expected to be familiar with the names and deeds of all the great of past ages. The elegance of learning is superficial now, beside the acquirements of the fair sex when you, madame, were a young lady."

"Thank you, Captain Dumont. Your idea is correct in some respects. Trivial authors *have* supplanted the ancient wisdom of my girlhood's favorites in the hearts of my countrywomen. But 'nil desperandum' be our motto. I was once familiar with every act and anecdote of Alfred's life. If my memory does not fail me he translated Bede's 'Church History' from Latin into the Saxon language."

"He did, madame. Your memory is as unfailing as your appreciation of culture. This brilliant man translated, also, Orosius' 'Roman History,' and Boetius' 'De Consolatione Philosophiæ.'"

"I recollect that fact, captain. He carried this last book *always* with him."

"Yes, madame, and no doubt you recall the 'Enchiridion,' or manual of meditations composed by him, and his Saxon translation of the New Testament, and that his laws were published by Wilkins."

"Perfectly, sir, perfectly. Those were my favorite studies when a girl, familiarizing myself with antiquity. It was an honor then to be cultured. They did not style us by such an unmeaning epithet as 'bibliomaniacs.'"

"Ah, madame," was the gallant response, "beauty was then only the mantle of woman. Her crown was intellect. Do you recall the enthusiasm of Plato? 'Man without culture and education is the most savage of all creatures which the earth nourishes.'"

"I do, captain, and the praise of the lovely Arista, penned by that poet whose country and parentage are unknown, Meleager.

"'Hence her resistless beauty, matchless sense,
The music of her voice, the eloquence
That, e'en in silence, flashes from her face:
All strikes the ravished heart, for all is grace.'

That was written one hundred years before the coming of our Saviour."

"Beautifully given, Mrs. Deming," exclaimed the hostess. "But there is one saying ascribed to King Alfred which merits attention, and it sustains my theory of office-holding. He compelled every freeman, who had two hides of land, to send his sons to school, and retain them there until they were fifteen years of age. His theory and his language were, 'A man born free, who is unlettered, is to be regarded no otherwise than a beast, or a man void of understanding.' I agree with him. There is no enormity so glaring in our country, as the elevation of the ignorant to office, by political parties, over the heads of the cultured and the educated. It prevails everywhere in our land, and to a fearful extent in our cities. What fits men for places of trust? Education. What unfits them? Ignorance. And must I, and those who think with me, be calumniated, because we advocate a system which elevates only the educated to high trust? A gentleman who clings to power in the city of New York, by the suffrages of the most ignorant portion of the population, tells me that I think myself made of a little better material than other people, because I maintain the distinction and pre-eminence of classes. I will maintain it in sympathy with the educated and the cultured of centuries. If the proposition that knowledge qualifies, and ignorance unfits, for office is sound, then our system of elections and office-holding is erroneous. Give all the right of suffrage when they shall have made the generous effort, and acquired information. Grade the privileges of being elected to the subordinate positions and to the higher places of trust, by ascending scales of education. You find no difficulties in making qualifications for voters regarding length of residence in the country and domicile. You can prescribe their age. You can exclude my scholarly cousin of nineteen, and admit a foreigner, or an ignorant country boor, who knows no more of the value and inviolability of a written constitution than he knows of the 'Pandectæ' of Justinian. And you can make and have made property qualifications the most dishonorable and shameful to a State that pretends to the possession of intelli

gence and ideas, — a balancing of gold against the divine attributes of the mind. Make the voters all educated men, and then demand higher culture and broader knowledge for the elective. The higher the office, the more thorough the culture."

"But, Miss Delano," interrupted Judge Evans, "the brightest luminaries of America have, in their origin, been ignorant, and by the force of native talent have attained eminence."

"A few, Judge Evans, a few only. Read me the list of such who have served the State to the State's advantage, and I will point out to you many great qualities of those men, darkened and eclipsed by want of early education. They have manifested greatness, but it has generally been one flash of lightning to an hour of cloud; it has been the gleam of the diamond through its native dust-heap. Their greatness of thought has been irregular; their actions betray unguided force and unbalanced virtue. They are great and noble, but ever they exhibit how great has been the disaster of early ignorance. On the other hand array before me the Revolutionary celebrities of our State, — our Jays, Hamiltons, Livingstons, Morrisses, and that pageantry of statesmen who start up before us at the memory of our first State constitution and our Federal compact, — and I will trace in each one a liberal and early education, enriched by classical knowledge, and strengthened by information regarding the peoples and laws of other lands, ancient and modern. I will point you to the records of their early life, their college days, and their probationary periods in the schools of law; and in their correspondence open to you language and ideas enriched by quotations of Greek, and Latin, and French, and proclaiming them masters of the art of orthography, rhetoric, and belles lettres. He that underrates native talent is weak; but he that would cause it to trample upon cultured talent is a madman. The marble of Pentelicus, in its native whiteness and splendor, challenges our admiration; but only when fashioned by the chisel of Ictinus and Phidias, and carved by Scopas and Praxiteles, is it worthy an elevation to the Parthenon of our veneration."

She spoke eagerly, earnestly, and her eyes beamed as lamps of thought. The love and pride of her native State moved her.

"You would advocate, then, the policy of the Athenians, Miss Delano," interposed Judge Evans. "Their highest offices were held only by the Pentacosiomedimni; their second grade were called the Hippodatelountes, the third class the Zengitæ, and the common people the Thetes."

"With this difference, judge: I would make the classes eligible to office upon an educational basis. That was the error of Solon in framing his laws; he made property the test. I would make brains the test; brains drilled and cultivated in the schools. The Thetes were allowed to vote; I would not allow them to vote until they had fulfilled the requirements of the educational test. I would make them eligible to the highest places when they had by study qualified themselves for them; not when they had amassed wealth. In my opinion, popular government, where every ignoramus can vote, or be elevated to office, is preposterous. How forcible the apothegm of Lycurgus, when advised to establish popular government in Lacedæmon: '*Go and first make a trial of it in thy own family.*' No, judge, show me an educated constituency, and I will show you a superior statemanship, and an exalted bench of judges. The definition given by Anacharsis of a democratic government is laconic: 'Wise men *propose* and fools *decide.*'"

"There is one essential element in the organization of political reformations," interrupted the earnest, silvery tones of Mrs. Deming, "that merits attention. It is a silent and invisible agent; but, like the touch of Midas, it turns all to gold. It is the language of a great Ruler: 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.' Give me the assurance that the humblest child of Adam knows and acknowledges his duty to love and serve God, I care not what may be his creed or his country, and I have found half the secret to the intelligence and impartiality of his political vote. If you insist upon his secular education as the preliminary to his political advancement, I demand that he know the statutes of the eternal God also. I demand that my ruler believe with Plato, in the immortality of the soul, the existence of a Divinity eminently good, who has decreed the observance of justice, and that true virtue is an imitation of God. Let him admit that, and I can trust him.

Establish, if you please, further tests of citizenship, grades of education for the elective franchise, and academic honors as the tests for rulers and statesmen, but ensure first a declaration of belief in an overruling and just Deity."

The words fell earnestly and solemnly from the aged lips so soon to crumble to dust. There was no response. Again the sweet, cultured tones stole over the silent assembly; and in the contemplation of that animated and still beautiful face all experienced what Lord Kames has styled "the sympathetic emotion of virtue." So had spoken, in her days of power and influence, the superb mother of May Delano; and now something in the pathos and melody of the tones drew the orphan unconsciously nearer to the speaker.

"Morality, as a qualification and requisite for citizenship, has been the aim of wise men from the earliest ages. Charondas framed a law for the Thurians, imposing heavy fines upon any who were discovered to be on terms of intimacy with immoral persons. There was intense wisdom in that decree; but perhaps for the intricate transactions of modern business such a law would be impracticable. I have wandered, at different periods of my life, in every land. I have learned many languages, and conversed with elegant society everywhere in their own vernacular. I have seen the learned of the great capitals, and grown familiar with their society and literature, and my interest has been ever awakened in the triumph of virtuous culture over the fascinating and insidious attainments of immorality and gilded vice. Among those who recognize not God, there is often a gayety, a freedom of manners and elegance, which may readily engage the unwary. Literary talent and eminent genius so frequently cloak the worst purposes and principles of the heart, that one is unconsciously fascinated before the resultant evil is detected. I have known the clergyman, polished and affable, wielding the pen of Grotius, and conversing with the eloquence and enthusiasm of Hardwicke, and pleading from his pulpit with the elegance and sublimity of St. Clement in his 'Pedagogue,' and his exhortation to the Gentiles. It was all vanity. It cloaked libertinism and indulgence. Upon the fair silver shield of native talent the foul fiend had breathed and the lustre was dimmed. The pernicious influence such a man may exert is incalculable. The statesman, by the force of his eloquence and the

splendor of his diction, may mislead the people to final ruin. Hence I maintain that every approach to executive and judicial and legislative office should be fortified. In the first instance, the voter should avow the ascendancy of the Divinity. Then no man should cast his ballot except for an upright, moral, God-fearing man; that fact to be ascertained by the employment of all the faculties granted us for caution and moral defence."

"Madame," responded Captain Dumont, "your theory would have spared my native land the horrors of its Revolution. My ancestors were slaughtered like sheep, as an oblation to this spirit of indifference and irreligion. Men may sneer at it now, but inevitably political convulsion and ruin overtake the people who forget God. Strength of character does not consist in defying Heaven, in ignoring the pure impulses which were fanned to flame at the mother's knee. Religion strengthens the resolutions of man to bear misfortune with dignity. Atheism, scepticism, hardens the heart, and tends to blunt the imagination, to depress the spirit, and to contract idealism. The sublimity of poetry, the ardor of patriotism, the glories of self-sacrifice, have all, in their highest development, been associated and identified with the convictions of religion."

As this conversation was finally interrupted by the entrance of servants with refreshments, Miss Delano turned away, but with the determination to know more of this volatile and gifted Frenchman, who had seen such varied service and adventure, and yet retained, amid all his vivacity and roving character, the deepest impressions of religion and virtue. His deference to, and sympathy with, Mrs. Deming's religious vein was as edifying as his previous wit and learning had been amusing. Carrie Deming, whose eyes detected every movement of her friend, observed that, later in the evening, she sought again the society of the officer, naturally and easily enough, and without arousing apparently the curiosity of any other guest. But she, alive ever to the dignity and reserve of her friend's manner, knew that some sudden fancy had taken possession of her. The heiress approached the table where he was turning over carelessly the leaves of Voltaire's "Henriad," and requested his opinion of the poem.

"You may have honored me, Miss Delano," he replied, "sufficiently to bear in mind that I remarked once before

this evening that scepticism tends to blunt the imagination. The 'Henriad' sustains me in that assertion. The versification is admirable, the style easy and flowing, and the narrative well sustained. But something more is requisite to the formation of a perfect epic. The supernatural is the life of an epic poem. Observe that this scoffer attains the height of the sublime and the beautiful only when religion is introduced. And yet so perverse was this gifted intellect that when the Divinity appears he must clothe him, not in the splendor of the Christian's God, but in the false attributes of an allegorical Deity. He bows to the paramount necessity of religion as a step to the glorious, the thrilling, the elevating, and yet turns his back upon the true God."

The dignified and beautiful recognition of the supernatural will ever exalt a man in the estimation of a true woman, and one so fervent in the practices of her faith as his listener was irresistibly drawn towards him.

"You have repeated my own words regarding this poem. Uncle requested me to read it, and give him my impression of its beauties, and that was substantially my remark. Brilliant, elegant, urbane, Voltaire failed to attain the height nature designed him for by his senseless infidelity. His great works never fulfilled the promise of his real abilities. But tell me, as you have alluded to his introduction of allegorical characters, do you admire that poet who sometimes opens with the invocation: —

"'With Jove begin, ye Nine, and end with Jove'?

I allude to the gifted bucolic poet, Theocritus."

"Ah, Miss Delano," exclaimed the gallant Frenchman, "how wonderful that you should have alluded to him whose words have been whispering in my ears from the moment I was honored by your acquaintance and your condescension!"

"I was not aware," was the pleasant response, "that anything about me could recall Theocritus. I am too intensely modern to be suggested by the memory of the distinguished Greek."

"Not at all. His power consisted in his perfect portraiture of all periods of the world. Mark his miniature of my hostess in his famous epithalamium of Helen and Menelaus: —

"'When she appears, are all eclipsed and lost,
And hide the beauties that we made our boast.

> And as, when winter melts, when darkness flies,
> And spring and noontide brighten all the skies,
> So bloomed the virgin Helen in our eyes;
> So bloomed she, beautiful above the rest,
> Tall, slender, straight, with all the graces blest.'"

She is a wonderful daughter of Eve who, at all times, is proof against poetical and graceful flattery. Miss Delano's cheeks bloomed instantly like the rose plucked by Proserpina on the Nysian plain.

"Beware the fate of Alessio!" she said amid her blushes. But the incense of adulation was grateful nevertheless. It is a weakness of all human nature. The manner of the application alone gauges the pleasure. The familiar across the drawing-room failed not to notice the sudden flush, and marvelled discreetly. One quick glance of his steel blue eyes informed the officer that his shaft had wounded his quarry. With exquisite tact he turned the conversation directly to the vein which his previous observation and information had apprized him was the most agreeable. He glanced across at a case of stuffed birds, and remarked, "You love natural history, I see. I share your taste, and my travels have confirmed my youthful fancy."

"I am only a tyro in that realm," she said, studying carefully his physiognomy as she spoke. There was a bright, triumphant light in his eyes and a joyous expression which puzzled her. "Moses, Aristotle, and Buffon are my delight, but in the haunts of my own native hills do I alone feel at home with nature. The classifications of this immediate neighborhood I am quite familiar with. I know every beast and bird and fish that makes 'Sublimity' a temporary or a permanent home. These birds in the case were shot for me by my cousin, who is one of the best ornithologists of the State, for his years."

"Do you not sometimes fear, Miss Delano, that this fever for classification, for reducing all things to physical symbols, for seeing nothing in creation but teeth, beaks, claws, and vertebræ, may lead to materialism?"

"Not at all. Though I discover differences in the natures of men, — that some discover beauty, a spiritual beauty, in every flower and every motion of a bird, and others seem devoid of all appreciation that is not predicated upon material uses, —I cannot believe that in any man the soul is wholly torpid, or that investigation can render it so My theory of

Christianity is that it so enlightens the heart that every research confirms the truth, throws light upon it. I believe that the study of nature leads to God, tends in that direction, and that only perversity distracts man from him in the study of his works. Revealed religion does not abolish natural religion, but strengthens it and acts in harmony with it. I should not be afraid to probe into the material formation of any living or inanimate creation. Nor do I hold the doctrine that without revealed religion the heart is insensible to beauty. I know better. I know that had I, as a daughter of a North American savage, been placed when a little girl upon those lofty peaks spanned by my bridge, and suffered to grow up in communion with the skies above and scenery beneath me, allowed to cull the flowers and watch the sweep of the eagle sunward, I would have found that spiritual sense of beauty which would have whispered 'God.' Christianity is not everything. Before it came, the world revolved in loveliness and the majesty of the eternal was revealed in his works. Christianity was the physician, not the creator, of man. No! Captain Dumont, I am not afraid of exploration. Research confirms truth and blasts falsehood. Evil only fears the light. But my guests appear to be preparing for flight. I should be happy to continue our acquaintance. Mrs. Lagrange is a very intimate friend of mine, and often rides with me. On our horseback expeditions I should feel honored at any time by your escort, or when I ride alone."

"I am too happy," exclaimed the officer; "my cup of joy is full. When will you ride again?"

"My first excursion will be to-morrow morning early, long before you will think of opening your eyes."

"Ah, Miss Delano, may I attend you to-morrow morning if my eyes are open?"

She laughed merrily, and then said, "*Certainement, monsieur. Aimez-vous l'air le matin?*"

"*Oui, oui,*" exclaimed the delighted Dumont; "*j'aime l'air le matin.*"

They were parted at this moment by the rush of the retiring guests, who came forward to take leave of their hostess. As Captain Dumont swept out of the drawing-room with two ladies upon his arms, he gave Miss Delano one of those intense and undisguised looks of admiration which few women are at a loss to interpret. She was interested enough in this stranger to feel the compliment, and turning to her friend,

who was carefully watching every movement and glance, said quietly and in her usual unruffled tone: —

"Captain Dumont and I are likely to be friends some day. I like him."

"I should fancy you did," was the instantaneous response.

"You have done nothing the whole evening but look into his beautiful eyes whenever you dared."

"Nonsense, Carrie. He is talented and graceful. I could admire him very well as an acquaintance, a casual acquaintance, nothing more."

"*Nous verrons*," was the incredulous response. The conversation was checked at this juncture, and the female catechism reserved for the night-watches above stairs.

After the friends had attained the privacy of their bedchamber Miss Deming unbosomed herself thus: —

"Now I can tell you what I have been crazy to mention the whole evening. What do you think I have got?"

"A letter from the moon probably. How should I know?"

"No, it's a letter from the son, — the son of somebody, Heaven knows who. There's a book with it too, written by himself, and such a lovely book! Just like him. I can see him on every page."

"Well, you are as incomprehensible as the Cumæan sibyl. Go on. What a relief it is to raze this mountain of Pisgah from one's head!"

As she spoke down fell a torrent of chestnut hair, covering her like the Grecian ideal of the foam-born.

"Why, it's a note from that marvel of beauty at St. Luke's. I wrote you about him."

"Certainly; that is interesting. Go on; I'm listening. What is his name?"

"Why, I told you that we all believed he was concealing his name and family. He signed this note simply "Iconoclast," the same name as his *nom de plume* in the book. He went away from the hospital without leaving any direction by which I could acknowledge the receipt of this book. He just vanished; and I don't know who he is from Adam. He thanked me most eloquently for my attention to him. Here is the letter and here is the book."

She handed the two to her friend, who had thrown herself upon the bed preparatory to a midnight chat. Miss Delano

glanced over the brief but ardently worded note, and then opening the book and glancing over the title-page said: —

"Why, you can ascertain who he is at his publisher's, Dumandy's."

"Not a bit of it, May. I attemped that game, but Dumandy laughed at me, saying, 'The author is strictly incognito. I am sorry that I cannot gratify you, Miss Deming.' But read me a few pages. I want you to see the style. There is a novelty about it that is refreshing. Open anywhere. I don't care, as I have read only parts of it, and intend to read it regularly through after a while."

The heiress commenced at the first chapter, and before she was aware of the flight of time the clock in her room, with a loud, whirring note of preparation, struck *two*.

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "It is so late, and I have to rise so early in the morning." The coverlet covered her and her friend in an instant, and in a few moments Somnus reigned. But over the head of Miss Delano waved the sceptre of dreams, and through the silence of the summer night came "murmurs from the deep sea," musical as those that followed the flying Amphitrite and secured the dolphin a place among the stars.

Chapter XVIII.

I never met a Frenchman in all my life who would not postpone the idea of Paradise altogether for the sake of a pretty woman.

LOLA MONTEZ.

THE sun was reaching over the eastern hills and tipping the park grass with diamonds, as the heiress appeared in her riding-habit upon the deserted lawn before her dwelling. Fresh from her cold bath, which came as regularly as the morning prayer, her step was as elastic and her cheek as blooming as though she had enjoyed her usual quantum of rest. She passed rapidly down the walk to the mounting-block, secured a firm seat upon her steed, took the bridle from the groom, and bounded away towards the Sorrow Kil. Her guests were asleep, and silence brooded over "Sublimity." When she reached the porter's lodge "Shorty" hobbled out to open the gate for her, and communicated the fact that a gentleman,

mounted and restless, had made his appearance several times before the lodge, inquiring for her. He had been too impatient, or his horse had been too uneasy, to tarry long at a time, and she would no doubt find him somewhere below on the Kil road. But she had just issued into the highway when Captain Dumont made his appearance, coming down the northern road from the direction of the Lagrange estate at full speed. He had kept his eye upon the park, and saw her in the distance leaving the gallery. As he joined her, with his keen eyes flashing with delight, and reined his horse to her moderate pace, she said: —

"You remind me, Captain Dumont, of the Chaldeans. I recalled their wild flight as I saw you tearing down the road. Are you scriptural scholar enough to repeat the account?"

"No, fair lady; my memory fails me. Your superior talent must recall the verses to me, and then I shall tell you why you are a disciple of my beautiful countrywoman, Diana de Poitiers."

"Do you refer to her sanitary career?"

"Ah, you know everything, Miss Delano. You shall eclipse her fifty years, I am sure. Now will you honor me with the verses as we descend this gloomy wood, which recalls the opening lines of Dante's 'Inferno'?"

They were descending to the dense shadows which darkened the rock-hewn road along the Sorrow Kil, and she repeated, in a clear, spirited tone, the words of Habakkuk: —

"'Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.'"

"*Vous êtes la dame la plus magnifique que je connaisse*," exclaimed the excitable officer, spurring on after her, for, gaining the level road of the Kil, she proceeded to put in execution the last line of the quotation, and proceeded at a pace which gave her companion no opportunity for conversation or compliments. He soon overtook her, however, and, after a few remarks of admiration at the beauty of the secluded glen, proceeded to satisfy his curiosity regarding something which had attracted his attention in the park.

"Will you do me the honor," he said, "to inform me what is the beautiful horse I see in the field? Do you ride him, the white horse? I should think a lady would prefer him for her saddle-horse."

"He is mine," was the response flung back to him over her shoulder, as Warwick was again taking the lead. "I won him in a race. Do you credit it?"

"*Certainement, mademoiselle.* So fine a rider might do anything. But did you win him from a lady?"

"No, from a gentleman; and an elegant horseman he was too. He is a full-blooded Arabian steed, and I call him Muslama."

"Ah, Muslama!" exclaimed her companion. "I was very sure of it. You know Monsieur Earle, then; I see, I see!"

"Do you know Mr. Earle?" she said, in surprise, checking Warwick's pace.

"Many years, Miss Delano. I travelled with him in Persia."

"How fortunate! You are just the one I should like to ask a favor from."

"So lovely a lady can ever command me. Speak, my lady. I am your subject, and a soldier."

"Mr. Earle has invited me to visit his country-seat below here with my friends. Miss Deming and I wish to call there some day, as he has a fine museum, and we want to inspect it. Now, if you will be kind enough to escort us, I will send my carriage for you, and you shall be our gallant."

"I shall be too happy. It is too much honor. When will you go, mademoiselle?"

"This morning, after breakfast, if it is convenient for you."

"I am ready to obey your commands every hour, every minute."

"Very well. You are very kind, captain. I shall consider you engaged for eleven o'clock this morning, and you may expect my carriage at Mrs. Lagrange's at that hour."

They bounded along at a brisk gallop towards the village, where Miss Delano usually attended in person to her marketing, and whither she was bound, at this early hour, to make provision for the increased number of her guests. She pointed out every object of interest to the officer as they sped, and before their arrival in the streets of the village he was more fascinated and enthralled by her beauty and loveliness than upon the previous evening. The gay, humorous vein in the man's character developed under the influence of her buoyant spirits and her merry laugh, and finally she was utterly absorbed in listening to his rattling descriptions of foreign adventure, or convulsed with laughter at his droll re

marks upon men and character. When they arrived at length in the streets of the town, he assisted her to alight, and awaited her return when she entered her familiar haunts for marketing purposes, and stood demurely holding the bridles of both horses. At length the house-keeping orders were all given, and, mounting their steeds, they were off for a gallop along the river-side, and a return homeward by another and longer route. They soon found themselves upon pleasant terms of intimacy, and Miss Delano was priding herself upon having discovered at last an acquaintance who would enjoy her society, and be serviceable to her in her many expeditions to the surrounding country, when she was surprised by a manifestation of French gallantry, so startling and yet so eminently ridiculous that she nearly lost all control of herself and her horse in her convulsions of laughter. After a bold sweep up the river road of some two miles' duration, they turned to the westward, and ascended a road leading upward through a glen shaded by trees, and moist from the waters which trickled through the rocks. The whole surface of the road and the glen, for a few rods, was saturated with moisture oozing from the banks. At one side was a spring, beside which the heiress halted, and declared that she would have a drink before she proceeded further. The principal difficulty to the accomplishment of her wish was the absence of any drinking-cup. After a brief parley, during which the gallant Frenchman volunteered to sacrifice his hat upon the altar of her thirst, assuring her that it would hold water sufficiently long to give her a draught, and which she instantly declined, he proposed that she should alight, and with her joined hands scoop up enough of the volatile element to satisfy her thirst. This proposition meeting with more favor, he assisted her to dismount, and then took charge of both horses until she could gather up the train of her riding-habit, and make her way over the mosses to the spring. Daintily picking her way through the wet mosses, and exposing at every step a foot and ankle which drew exclamations of admiration from her only spectator, and elicited from her in return a peremptory *hush* or a laugh, she reached the fountain, and drew off her riding-gauntlets. After several struggles between riding-habit and modesty she succeeded in scooping up enough water to satisfy her. With an exclamation of triumph she turned to retrace her steps, amid the applause of her companion, but an unlucky slip of her foot upon a moss-covered stone precipitated her to the

earth, and covered her shoulder with mud. Mortified as she had never been in her life before, at the absurd figure she cut, and forced to laugh at the grimaces of the Frenchman, who was striving to restrain his merriment at her catastrophe, and then stood a woeful picture of baffled gallantry, unable to help her by reason of both hands being employed in holding the horses, she contrived to gain her equilibrium, and gave way to an inordinate scream of laughter, in which he joined.

"This affair will ruin me, Captain Dumont," she said at length, as he stood beside her, endeavoring with his handkerchief to eradicate the signs of her disaster. "If Colonel Deming and Carrie see these stains, I never shall hear the last of it. They will declare that Warwick threw me, or, worse than all that, I fell off my horse. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Do not be troubled, my beautiful lady; do not fear. No gentleman is ever at a loss when a lady is to be served. I shall show you what I shall do. In my country, the beautiful lady is queen of the heart."

With imposing dignity of manner, and, refusing to respond to her inquiries by other than the brief remark, "You shall see what you shall see," he aided her to remount Warwick, and then begged of her to wait for him "just one brief minute."

His movements were incomprehensible, and she sat in silent wonder at his pompous manner of procedure. He first secured his horse to the fence, and then, with the countenance of a forlorn hope, marched along the road in search of something. What was her amazement to see this beau-ideal of gallantry select the worst mud-puddle in the road, and deliberately fling himself into it, — rolling over and over until he was one sheet of mud from head to foot. Not a stitch of his clothing or hat, not a line of his face, was allowed to escape the voluntary penance of the mud-bath. He rose, at length, the most forlorn and ridiculous representative of mud and misery, and, planting his hand upon his heart, bowed in the direction of the queen of his homage.

"Now you shall escape the great ridicule. My horse threw me; you dismounted to help me. Hence the mud on your shoulder. Mademoiselle, I am your humble servant."

As he stood there besmeared with mud, with one eye nearly covered, and stretching out his arms in emphatic and

grotesque gesticulation, Miss Delano laughed till she was sore. When he started towards the fence for his horse, the frightened steed made frantic efforts to break his bridle and run off. The gallant animal had never been approached by such a specimen of humanity before. At length the horse was sufficiently subdued to enable the officer to mount; and away he dashed up the glen, the most astonishing spectacle, for a French officer of cavalry, that ever greeted American eyes. Warwick followed with his convulsed rider, who was unable for a long time to regain her self-control. At length she said: —

"Captain Dumont, you are the first gentleman in the world. As you are so hopelessly besmeared I shall not interfere with your gallant intentions, but shall remain silent. People at 'Sublimity' may form their own conclusions regarding our ride. But you have conferred on me a kindness which I hope to be able some day to repay."

The grotesque appearance of her escort was too much for her; and again her laugh echoed over the fields.

"*Vous me faites un compliment auquel je ne sais que répondre*," was the gratified response of one who made light of so trifling a matter of gallantry.

"Captain Dumont, I beg of you not to ride into the park in such a plight. They will not cease laughing at you for a month. It really is not necessary for you to make such a personal sacrifice; indeed it is not."

The gallant officer with dignity declined any further conversation which might cause him to relent, and forget the self-sacrifice he owed to the fair sex. He changed the subject at once, by the exclamation: "*Mon Dieu! que le temps passe vite dans votre société;*" and then went rattling along in his humorous way upon the absurd figure he cut, and the astonished looks which were cast upon the two, as they passed the farm-yards now lining the highway. Finally, after a long ride, they approached the boundaries of "Sublimity," and galloped along its enclosure. As they passed in through the gate, "Shorty," leaning upon his crutch, shouted out to the porter's lodge: —

"Mike! Mike! come out as fast as ever you kin. Miss Delano has floored the gentleman some place."

An Irish head appeared at the door, and a rich brogue muttered, "Vot the divil is that? Be jabers, it's a mud-toortle. Houly Moses! that bates me intirely." He clapped

a cap upon his head, and ran away after them to take the horse from his mistress. The entire household were assembled upon the gallery and lawn. The confusion and laughter that ensued baffle description. The fact may, however, be recorded, that Miss Delano escaped completely by the enthusiastic determination of her gallant.

. . . . . .

Promptly at the hour of eleven the dashing and raven-colored steeds of the heiress whirled up in front of the gallery. The Frenchman alighted from the carriage, and met the young ladies arrayed for their ride descending the lawn. They were as fair and misty, robed in their summer dresses of white, as the Maid of Avenel. As he handed the queenly and lithe owner of the carriage to her seat, and then stepped in after her, he recalled the lines: —

"And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A nymph, a naiad, or a grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face."

A cloudless sky was above them as they passed the porter's lodge and descended to the valley of the Kil. Following the protecting shadows of the banks, they reached, after a time, the manufacturing village, and, driving to the Hudson, crossed in the semi-hourly ferry-boat to the eastern shore. The rays of the sun were excluded by their parasols, but for a mile after reaching the shore the glare was oppressive, and then lost its fervency under the trees of the deep wood which they entered. Making a detour from the bank of the river, the road led under rocky cliffs for a time, and then turned westward towards the Hudson, passing, within pistol-shot of that stream, a porter's lodge and tall iron gate densely shaded by huge horse-chestnut trees planted before the Revolution. This was their entrance-gate, but an obstacle met them at the very threshold. The iron gate was locked, and no friendly porter looked out at the door of the lodge. In his place appeared an object which sent a thrill through the veins of the trio in the carriage and the coachman on the box. A glossy creature, black as the ebony of Mauritius, stole around the corner of the lodge, and with a frantic yell sprang against the bars of the gate, clinging to them like a cat, and showing his white fangs. It was a black tiger. All felt there was sufficient zoölogical information in the party to satisfy them of this fact. With the instinctive glance of

self-preservation they scanned the gate and the stone wall which shut in the grounds. The height and strength of both satisfied them there was no immediate danger. The beast glared at them, and the horses, terrified by his fierce aspect and wilder cries, commenced to plunge violently. Miss Delano, recovered from the first alarm of his appearance, directed the coachman to drive forward a little. As the carriage passed the gate, a stranger appeared beside his sable majesty of the jungles and peered through the bars of the gate.

"There is some one, Captain Dumont. Let us get out and see what all this means."

The officer sprang from the carriage, and assisted Miss Delano to alight. They turned backward to the gate and beheld a strange face and stranger garb. The countenance was evidently Oriental. The man had a heavy beard, and was habited in a striped *caftan* of silk and cotton descending to the ankles, with long sleeves, and belted at the waist by a leathern girdle, secured by clasps and worked on the edges in colored worsted and silk. A kerchief of white cloth, folded triangularly, was thrown over his head so as to fall down over his neck and shoulders, and was bound to his head by a twisted band of camel's hair. He had sandals made of interlaced palm-leaves and papyrus-stalks, and wore in his belt a poniard made of antelope's horn sharpened at the end.

As the two approached the gate the Oriental caught the tiger by the nape of his neck and flung him backward on to the grass, where he lay crouching, with his eyes glaring upon the intruders. Then, with a slight bow, he kissed his hand and laid it upon his forehead in salutation.

"Is Mr. Montrose Earle at home?" inquired the heiress.

The man shook his head.

"He resides here, — does he not?"

Again the dubious shake. It was evident he did not comprehend the question.

Captain Dumont made his essay for information.

"*Pouvez-vous me répondre en Francais?*"

Again the doubtful shake. Then the officer pointed to Miss Delano, and then into the grounds. This was comprehended perfectly. The man shook his head emphatically. There was no mistaking that dissent. The heiress tried German and Italian with no better success. Then the Oriental

walked deliberately into the lodge, and returned with a strip of board painted white, and lettered in black thus:—

"*No Woman, no Bible, no Tract, admitted here.*"

He held it up at the gate with a respectful but composed expression, then turned away and carried it back into the lodge. The heiress recalled the conversation at Newport, and, laughing heartily, communicated Mr. Earle's difficulties to her companion. She then produced her card, and requested the officer to write Miss Deming's name and his own up on it.

"I'm not going in where that frightful beast is; you can *rely* upon that," called back the young lady from the carriage.

"Nonsense, Carrie! Mr. Earle no doubt has it under control. But wait for the answer."

The officer handed the card with the three names through the bars of the gate, and the Oriental, after a brief inspection of it, turned away into the grounds. They could see him walking on along the smooth, hard carriage-road inside until he reached a short pillar of white stone in the grass, upon which he deposited the card, and then called in a loud voice, "Cyrus! Cyrus!" He turned immediately back towards the gate, and, reaching the spot where the tiger lay crouching, put his hand caressingly upon the brute's back and appeared to be talking to him. In a few seconds a large and savage-looking dog of the Persian breed came bounding into view, and, reaching the pillar, took the card in his teeth and disappeared again. The tiger made an effort to intercept him, but a firm grip held the black beast to the earth, and, after a few blows upon his head from the horn poniard, he was reduced to subjection As the outsiders watched this whole performance in amazement they commented upon it, and then endeavored to penetrate further into the mysteries of the enclosure. They could discover nothing, however, but a grassy plain, bounded on the south by a dense wood with lofty hills beyond. The carriage-way curved out of sight before them, and the stone pillar was the only other evidence of improvement. It resembled a sun-dial. No indication of dwelling or garden was to be seen.

They were perfectly shaded by the horse-chestnuts where they stood, and, after a few glances at the tiger and his Oriental master, which satisfied them that the beast was under control, they discussed the strange porters connected with

the estate, and speculated upon the sights likely to greet them if they should be permitted to enter. The heiress had doubts upon the reception she would meet with after her ingenious appropriation of the proprietor's favorite steed. Presently she uttered an exclamation, as a tall object stalked into view, passing across the greensward commanded by their position. It was a camel of the Arabian species, and of that lighter form which is bred for the saddle with a single rider.

"See, Captain Dumont; there is a ship of the desert! Why, this man must be a Cuvier or a Daubenton. I am crazy to see the inside of his retreat. Come here, Carrie, and see this dromedary!"

At this moment a servant in livery, and, apparently, an Englishman, made his appearance, and in some foreign jargon addressed the Oriental, who immediately produced an iron collar and chain from the lodge, and securing the tiger dragged him out of sight. The servant then approached the gate and unlocked it, bowing as he threw it open, and saying, "Mr. Earle bids me say that he feels highly honored by this visit, and requests you immediately to drive up to the house."

The carriage was at once wheeled about, and when the party had passed into the enclosure the servant locked the gate again, and, mounting to the box beside Mike, directed him where to drive.

A fine park was instantly opened to their view, stretching away in sunlight and shadow, and bounded on the south by the woods they had caught a glimpse of before, and on the north by greenhouses running along the entire boundary-wall on that side, through whose windows, alternately opened or closed, the brilliant hues of tropical flowers and fruits were manifest. The long stretch of conservatories seemed ample enough to exhibit specimen plants of a world. Far away to the southward deer were grazing, and nearer were *springboks* vaulting into the air. The latter were of light, elegant forms, smooth, slender limbs, cinnamon-colored backs, and white bellies. Each had a chestnut-colored band along the side, and the horns of the bucks were lyre-shaped. The snow-white hair on their rumps was distinctly visible. In the foreground was a long Arabian tent, made of goats' hair spun and woven, and beside it a spear was fixed in the earth.

"The long spear," explained the officer, "indicates the presence of a prince or distinguished chief among the Arabs."

"You have visited that nation, then, Captain Dumont?" said Miss Deming.

The officer responded in the affirmative, and then pointed out to his companions three superb coursers of the desert bounding over the meadow. They bore the peculiar characteristics of Muslama, but were dark-hued, one of them black as the starless night. Away they flew in their wild romp, plunging down the gentle declivities of the park, and then sweeping around breast to breast in a great circle with the regularity of trained cavalry, only to break away again and pursue independent flights.

Thus flew the fiery steed immortalized by Homer:—

"Strikes with resounding hoof the earth, and flies
Where the wide champaign spread before him lies,
Seeks the remembered haunts, on fire to lave
His glowing limbs, and dash amid the wave.
High rears his crest, and, tossing with disdain,
Wide o'er his shoulders spreads his stream of mane,
And fierce in beauty, graceful in his speed,
Snuffs his known fellows in the distant mead."

In contemplation of these wild denizens of the desert, they failed to observe their proximity to a narrow belt of trees through which their carriage rolled. They cleared this belt of elms and shrubbery, and instantly a scene of magnificence and wild grandeur burst upon them.

Chapter XIX.

Nor will it less delight th' attentive sage
T' observe that instinct, which unerring guides
The brutal race, which mimics reason's lore,
And oft transcends.

SOMERVILLE.

THEY were entering a vast zoölogical garden, shaded by forest-trees and picturesque in masses of fallen rocks crowned with wild vines and mosses. From the ragged edges of a mountain cliff plunged a foaming cataract, and in the sides

of a rocky gorge recesses had been excavated and defended by iron bars, where passed and repassed the savage denizens of every desert and the striped and spotted beasts of every clime. The lion of Dekkan and the tiger of Bengal blended their fearful howls with the cries of the African leopard and the whine of the American panther. There prowled the long-lipped bear of the Terai, the jaguar of the Andes, the cheetah of the Himalayas, and the gyal of Upper Assam. There was secured the Asiatic stag, the reindeer of Lapland, and the muntjak or barking deer of India. Snow-white bears from the Arctic, buffaloes from Hindostan, rhinoceroses from the country of the Anzicos, antas or wild cows from Peru, musk-deer from the Asiatic Cliffs, and wildebeests or wild bulls from South Africa were confined and classified, circling the entire cliff with their cages, and blending strange sounds in the summer noontide. On every side, amid the masses of fallen rocks, were dens of serpents, writhing in sport, warming themselves in the sunlight or hissing in their rage. There was the brown, yellow, and blue Naja of Savary, with its plaited head, large venomous fangs, and neck dilatable into a disc or hood when enraged. There writhed the spectacled snake of India, with its dilated hood and rimmed, spectacled eyes. There were dens of coral snakes, the deadly reptiles of the Amazon head-waters, and nests of horned serpents from Egypt and North Africa. There were cages of American rattlesnakes, twining and gliding in network, and fearful serpents twisting their entire community into a pyramid for defence, with heads pointing out on every side.

In one cage were coiled the enormous serpents of Ceylon, fifty feet in length, covered with yellow and black spotted scales. This species is called the Pambon Rajah, or Royal Serpent. In one den glided a dozen Outa snakes from Chunor, two feet in length, and perfectly white except the top of the head, which is shining black. It has been known to follow the destroyer of its mate three hundred miles for revenge.

One cage confined the great-eared owls of Syria, and another the short-eared owls of Arabia. One held the wolves from the gorges of Cilicia, and another storks from the Delta of the Nile. There were black ostriches from Caffraria, and gray ostriches from Asia, Sarabandi lizards, Nilotic lizards, and the venomous *zbubura* of the Arabs,

crocodiles from the Malayan islands, and alligators from Louisiana. From the Caspian had come the *Grus Virgo*, or Numidian crane, which from its peculiar dancing walk the French have styled "demoiselle." It was three feet in length, of a rich bluish-gray, with cheeks, throat, breast, and tips of long hinder feathers black. A tuft of delicate white plumes streamed backward from each eye. There were groups of Impeyan pheasants, larger than the common fowl, whose brilliant plumage elicited ejaculations of admiration as the visitors rolled by. The changing hues of violet and gold, blue and green, were dazzlingly beautiful. The feathers were soft and velvety, and the image of this bird startlingly glorious to strangers' eyes. There were scarlet flamingoes from Louisiana, and white flamingoes, from the lake of Oroomiah, with scarlet wings; and near to their prison was a network of wire enclosing land and water, and upon the pool was floating that *rara avis*, the black swan from New Holland, with its bright red bill (*Cygnus atratus*).

Upon another artificial pool were floating or diving birds large as geese. They were white-throated and white-breasted. Their wings were spotted with brown, and their broad tails were rounded at the ends. Their necks were long and crooked, with yellow bills. "That," said Captain Dumont as they passed, "is a species of cormorant, tamed and used by the Chinese to fish for them. They will perch upon the edge of a boat until the command is given, and then with a short flight into the air they dive down into the water and bring up fish for their master. I have seen them fishing for their owner on the tributaries of the Burrampooter. But voilà! Monsieur Earle works for the good of his race. This knowledge is of such vast importance to his countrymen. Stop a minute, driver."

The carriage paused that the excited man might examine a series of fine wire cages, filled with insects and leaves of plants, in which he seemed to be remarkably interested. He pointed out to his companions the various bugs or beetles which are classified under the order *Coleopteræ*. "We call them in France '*escarbot*,'—you call them in English 'beetles.' The German calls them '*käfer*.' Oh! they are so useful to gardeners, farmers, fruit-raisers. They kill insects which ruin your beautiful fruit; they sweep away the caterpillar from your cabbage. Monsieur Earle will study these creatures until he knows their habits, their food, every-

thing. Then he shall write you a great book to save your gardens. In Europe the great fruit-growers colonize the '*escarbot*' upon their grounds."

He pointed out to them many varieties. One was the *Cicindela sexguttata* of Fabricius, a beautiful green species, with three white spots on each wing-cover. Others were a dull brown with fine greenish punctures on the wing-covers, which are cherished by the farmers of Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, for their valuable services.

"You must be careful, ladies, with your furs, when *this* rascal is around. He is a species of *Dermestes*. He will eat up the ladies' beautiful furs, and *this* one, this black and drab rascal, will eat up your dried meats and your fine books. You see it is very useful to know which one to love, and where you shall love him. Ah! Monsieur Earle shall no doubt write you a fine book. He shall be a very useful man some day. Drive on now. *Il fait chaud.*"

It was a wonderful garden. The classification indicated vast learning in the proprietor. Sauriology, ichthyology, mazology, every department of natural history, was in fact represented, and the eye wearied at last in variety. It looked as if another Bougainville had explored the globe with the wealth of Midas at command.

During their drive through the winding road of the zoölogical garden an attendant had been ever at their horses' heads to seize the reins in the event of their being frightened by the howls of the beasts. He was an Arabian, but conversed fluently in French and English with the occupants of the carriage, now checking the driver that some new sight might be properly enjoyed, and now alternately responding to the inquiries of the Frenchman and the ladies. He was tall and attenuated, with long face and glittering black eyes. He informed the visitors that he had accompanied the proprietor over the world, and aided him in securing many of the animals in the collection. "Mr. Earle is the bravest chief in the world," he said, proudly. "He fears not the devil." This child of the desert, a native of *El Hhammad*, that fearful wilderness which lies on the Syrian frontier, was gayly attired for a servant and keeper of wild beasts. He wore Armenian bag-breeches, and red Turkish shoes without stockings. Over his shoulders was flung a Grecian jacket, elaborately embroidered with gold lace. His jet-black hair was surmounted with a scarlet Levantine cap with long

black silk tassel. He carried one of the *corbashes* used to propel laggard draught horses in Egypt, its heavy butt-end being a terrible weapon in the hands of so muscularly built a rover. An American revolver peeped out of his girdle of red silk. He held the lives of six lions at command in consequence of his visit to the Western hemisphere. He ran along before the horses' heads until the carriage had reached the limit of his jurisdiction, a ledge of broken rocks heaped up as a barrier, and with a tall iron gate, which was opened by a venerable and white-haired servant of the Earle family, who had served on the estate from childhood. The Arabian, laying his right hand upon his heart, said, "Good-day to you!" and ran back to his charge. The white-haired servant only removed his hat and bowed as the carriage rolled past him.

"Miss Delano," said the officer, "had you not been a Christian, that Arab would have said to you and to all of us, 'Peace be with you;' that is to say, had we been Mahometans we should have received the grand courtesy."

"I have heard, Captain Dumont," was the reply, "that in some Roman Catholic provinces of Germany, the Romanists never salute the Protestants by the words common among themselves, 'Jesus Christ be praised.'"

"That is true, mademoiselle, and if a Protestant should be addressed thus, he would not respond by the Catholic reply, 'Forever and ever. Amen.'"

The carriage now rolled away through orchards of apple and pear trees, some bending beneath the weight of yellow and red fruit, and others holding their green burdens for the ripening suns of autumn. The Baldwin, the Early Sweet, the Lady Apple, the Maiden's Blush, the Northern Spy, the Newtown Pippin, the Spitzenberg, the Red Astrachan, the Roxbury Russet, the Vandevere, the Waltz, and the Yellow Bough, stretched in continuous line on the right, while upon the left were the rows of pear-trees symmetrically planted, and exhibiting upon their branches the ripening Seckel, the Winter Nelis, the Lycurgus, the Belle Williams, the Belle Lucrative, the Beurré d'Anjou, the Beurré Diel, the Buffum, the Flemish Beauty, the Duchesse d'Angouleme, the Onondaga, and the Louise Bonne de Jersey.

"There has been some fine gardener here at an early day," said Captain Dumont, pointing to the dense partitions of Norway fir, Austrian pine, and Scotch pine. "See how they

protect the orchards from cold winds. This makes the early and perfect fruit. Very few of your farmers know the great art of protection. You shall learn by and by."

They emerged at length from the shadows of the orchards, and a broad sweep of meadow opened before them, bounded on the east by the mountain range, and on the west by the Hudson, smooth, tranquil, and glistening in the noontide sun. No evidence of dwelling, cottage, or mansion appeared. Far away before them the road was traced in a dingy line, ascending and descending the gentle undulations of the meadow land. The fine, smooth emerald of the grass was on every side, and nibbling away at the verdure singly or in groups, or lying peacefully under the occasional trees, were flocks of Merino sheep, Cotswold or Oxford Down, French Merino, Shropshire Down, Silesian Merino, Spanish Merino, and Ryland. The cloudless sky was above them, and far to the southward was a boundary of forest, into which the road appeared to lead. Onward rolled the carriage through this peaceful scene, a striking contrast to the garden of howling beasts behind. At length the forest-trees loomed up close ahead. It was a neglected wood, carefully walled in from the meadow land, but allowed to manifest all the wildness and untrimmed luxuriance of a native growth. Between the giant oaks, and beeches, and yellow pine, the undergrowth had attained a great height, and up some of the larger trunks wild grape-vines curled and climbed, their leaves forming dense tops to the trees far above. The ivy was clinging to the oaks on every side, and when the English servant had left the box and opened the rustic gate for the carriage, the occupants found themselves passing under a grateful shadow, which in many places utterly excluded the sun. They soon crossed a large creek upon a bridge of unhewn oak, and then the wild grandeur of the forest solitude was revealed to them. The stream followed the road for a long distance, now curving around towards them as if it would cross their path, and then curving away again, its tortuous waters dark in the shadows of the wood, and occasionally dimpled by the fish rising to the surface. At long intervals it flowed over a pebbly bed, where the sun peered in and the ripples flashed in its light. The woods had been abandoned to solitude, and wild creatures were gliding in undisturbed freedom on every side. The red squirrel chattered from the boughs of the pine, the more cautious gray

squirrel stole with noiseless leaps from fallen tree or rotting trunk to the leaf-covered ground, and the gray hawk flew with dusky wings silently amid the wild wood. Occasionally the hoarse *caw* of the crow echoed above the tree-tops and the twitter of tiny birds or the hollow drumming of the scarlet-headed woodpecker broke the silence. Onward and still onward sounded the beat of the horses' hoofs upon the shaded road, until it seemed as if civilization had been abandoned and they were penetrating the wilds of the Black Forest.

But at length a huge hall of unhewn stone, dark and gray in the shadows of the trees, loomed up before them, standing in a partially cleared space. It was a tall, rectangular museum, lighted from above, and just beyond it appeared a cleared country with a venerable mansion and artistic gardens. As the carriage rolled past the museum, over the door were plainly manifest, in letters of stone, the Comanche title "Taak-quin-no" and beneath it in the dialect of the Witchitas, "A-ra-oh." The entrance was guarded by two sentinels in gray stone, one of them a Bedouin *hybeer* with a lance, and the other a Comanche chief grasping a bow of the tough and elastic wood of the "*bois d'arc*" or Osage orange. One step alone was used to gain access to the museum. It was a large stone of black syenite basalt, a fac-simile of the famous "Rosetta stone" discovered by Bouchard, and upon it was lettered in brass the single word "*Menes.*"

The visitors passed with curious eyes this solitary building, to inspect which was the principal object of their coming, and emerged upon the lawn before the mansion. The dwelling was ancient and massive, a square figure of the same unhewn material as the museum, and flanked by four octagonal towers of wood. The front and south sides, which looked upon the river, were graced with piazzas without columns or roofs, broad, airy spaces for promenade, where one could catch different views of the Hudson through the openings in a narrow belt of trees which ran along the bank. There was an ancient and foreign look about the building, which was justified by the facts, for it had been erected at a very early period in the history of the State by a family of Huguenot refugees, and from them passed into the possession of the Earles. The servant in livery sprang to the earth, and, opening the carriage-door, conducted the visitors across the front

piazza into the mansion. They passed in under the antlers of an American Moose, which had been secured above the front door, and was a trophy won by Montrose Earle in the forests of the Upper Ottawa. The trio were ushered from a broad hall into a large drawing-room elegantly furnished and rich in paintings, marbles, and mosaics of every land. The windows looked west and south upon the Hudson, and one door was open into a corner tower, disclosing exotic plants and flowers. Folding-doors of ancient and foreign make screened some apartment in the rear, and above them was a delicate silver hand pointing to a mystical and miniature painting, evidently of great antiquity, with the motto in raised silver letters on the frame "*Ουδεν Αδηλον.*" Upon one wall hung a large painting of the Phœnix which once in five hundred years came from Arabia to the temple of the sun at Heliopolis. It was in form and size like the eagle, its wings partly of a gold and partly of a crimson color. Tradition recounts its bearing the dead body of its parent enclosed in myrrh shaped like an egg. The artist had delineated the gorgeous bird at the instant it hovered above the Egyptian temple with its burden.

On *étagères* were collected miniature copies of the heathen gods of every nation, and the animals held sacred in every clime. There was the sacred bull, Mnevis, consecrated to Osiris, and the Apis of Memphis; there were lions and cats from the Temple of the Sun, and a beautiful imitation of the red granite Obelisk which marks the site of the Egyptian Heliopolis. There were labelled fragments from the ruins of the Syrian Heliopolis. There were parchments written in Estrangelo, the most ancient writing in the Syriac books, and by Michaelis and Adlerus, deemed of Arabic origin. There were curiously fashioned pipes of the Orient; one, a Persian *caleeoon*, had evidently, from the smell of the tube, been in recent use. The vessel in which the water was contained was jocosely marked in golden letters running round about it, "*Sizin Ahvâlūz yŏkhshée ōlsún V'Menimke yŏkhshée dûr*" (only let your condition be prosperous, and I am of course very well). Upon an exquisitely carved marble card-case, lay a copy of the entire Koran, written with that fineness and distinctness, by one of the Persian *Meerzas*, which caused Sir William Jones to regret that the art of printing had ever been discovered. The whole was contained in a manuscript six inches wide and twenty feet

long, which was rolled up and rested easily upon the card-case. Upon the large centre-table of the drawing-room was an elegantly bound Nestorian Gezza for festivals not in Lent, and also a copy of their Sünhádos, containing the canons of their church. The carpet that covered the floor of the drawing-room was manufactured by the natives of Tabreez, and an elegant shawl, from the same great mart of Persia, was thrown over a scarlet-velvet divan. From one wall depended a portrait, to the waist, of a Persian of Azerbijân, an athletic, manly figure, and a countenance beautiful as a Georgian. This elegant figure combined the size of the Tartar with the gracefulness of the Persians, that affable, insinuating people, who have been styled "*the French of Asia.*" Their refinement of torture was visible in the shape of an iron rod, upon one of the *étagères*, marked with the words of salutation, "*Güzimûsta geldüz*" (upon my eyes you have come). The rod is used by Persian princes to put out the eyes of younger princes, who by sudden death may become heirs to the throne. Beside this relic of barbarism was placed the *Scytale*, used by the Lacedæmonians. It was a simple, round stick of wood, whose perfect likeness was given to a departing general or admiral by the magistrates. When a secret order was to be sent to the army, a strip of parchment was wrapped about the wood and written upon. It was then unrolled and despatched to the commander, who alone could understand the order, by wrapping the parchment upon his similar roll of wood, thereby uniting the broken and disjointed words. Two Egyptian mirrors with handles rested upon the mantel-piece. They were hand-mirrors, round, and made of a composite of brass and copper highly polished, and inserted in handles of brass. They were found under the ruins of Thebes, and were no doubt similar to those carried from Egypt into the wilderness by the children of Israel, from which "the laver of brass and the foot of it," mentioned in Exodus, were made. One object particularly attracted the attention of Miss Delano and her friend. It was a fragment of rock cut in imitation of the stone seen at Susa by Ker Porter. It was covered with hieroglyphics and cuneiform inscriptions, and in one corner was a perfect cross of Malta. Below it was a statement, written by Porter, that among the Indians and Egyptians the cross often appears in their ceremonies in the shape of a plain +, and that it was generally symbolical of the divinity or

eternal life, and that a cross was certainly in the temple of Serapis, as the Egyptian emblem of the future life. Here was a startling addition to the information heretofore given by Montrose Earle, that the doctrine of the atonement was held by the Egyptians and manifested in the person of their god Osiris.

Their examination of the curiosities of the drawing-room was interrupted by the flinging wide open of the folding doors, and the disclosure of a magnificent library beyond them. Montrose Earle advanced from the library with words of greeting, and, with a pleasant smile upon his usually serious face, said to Miss Delano: —

"I am pleasantly surprised by your prompt acceptance of my invitation."

"We hesitated seriously, Mr. Earle, when we discovered your abhorrence of woman, Bible, and tract; but were more particularly discouraged by your gentle porter, the black tiger."

He laughed heartily, and then said, "I must correct your phraseology at the very threshold. Pardon me, Miss Delano, I have never yet seen a black tiger. The term is not correct. The tiger is distinctly marked. He is the *striped* cat. Nature does not trifle with the lion or the tiger. The variations of the color and shape of each are trifling. When you see no stripe, you see no tiger. The jaguar of South America is improperly called by travellers tiger, and they often confound with this latter beast, jaguars, ounces, and cheetahs. Allow me to make another division into genus and species. The term woman exhibited to you at the gate should not have deterred you a moment. Woman is the genus that is an assemblage of species with common characteristics. You and Miss Deming are a species comprehended under the genus woman, and I must say a very agreeable species, that is, ladies. There is a wide distinction between women and ladies. The term woman is used to determine the crowd; but you are presumed to know the distinction, and enter my enclosure as ladies."

"That is to say," was the response, "we are admitted specifically, and Captain Dumont enters with the entire and privileged genus, man."

"You have it, Miss Delano." He looked at her earnestly and with evident satisfaction. Her feminine instinct informed her that the capture of Muslama was forgiven, or at

least that the annoyance at his loss was modified considerably by the pleasure her society afforded him. She had a difficult game to play, and she exerted her powers of conversation and pleasing to the utmost.

"Your taste, Mr. Earle, as manifested in the arrangement and scenery of your estate, is admirable. But it is evident that a wild vein still circulates in your organization, as witness the monsters and the snakes. I imagine you would approach nearer to the perfect man, were you to admit to familiarity a greater number of species under the genus woman."

"Woman, Miss Delano, is so difficult of analysis, or rather it requires so great part of a man's existence to comprehend her, that if I were to admit a large number of species, I should confuse my study of her. I deem it better to admit few specimens, and endeavor to comprehend *them* perfectly. It is said that some women require a lifetime of study, and yet cannot be perfectly classified after all."

"In that no doubt consists the charm. Woman is like religion, Mr. Earle, divest her of all mystery, and all reverence is destroyed. That which one can comprehend perfectly is no longer religion. Perfect comprehension destroys the ideal, and in the ideal great minds live. There is a certain charm in mystery, your Greek motto over the door yonder to the contrary notwithstanding."

"You in a manner, Miss Delano, announce at once your decided hostility to rationalism."

"Unequivocally, I do, sir. I hold firmly to that investigation of all facts, and that line of Biblical exegesis which exalt the nature of the Deity, point out to man an eternal and more exalted destiny, and make men better citizens, husbands, brothers, and friends. Pure rationalism tends to sensuality, encourages egotism, discourages patriotism and heroism, and eventually is fatal to public and private virtue When I see its effects upon such gifted men as Schiller Goethe, Frederick Schlegel, De Wette, Schott, Paulus, and all the brilliant men who were swept away from truth by the Kantian philosophy; when I see their spiritual and sublime manhood blasted by its teachings, — I am thankful that I worship a revealed God, and hold a positive faith, for I am an American woman, and long for the highest development of my people; and I am persuaded that only that reason

which travels side by side with Christianity can so exalt them."

Montrose Earle gazed with admiration upon her eloquent eyes, and her mien spiritual and authoritative as Margaret of Zurich, who in the nineteenth century suffered herself to be crucified to redeem thousands of souls. He would have delighted to arouse her to further defence of her position, but the duties of host were pressing upon him, and it was necessary to devote a portion of his time to his other guests. After a partial acquiescence in her views, he turned to her friend, Miss Deming, and offered his arm to conduct her out into his grounds, and through the mysteries of his museum. Miss Delano followed with her other admirer, the officer.

Chapter XX.

And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

1 Kings, Chapter iv.

As the party entered the museum, Miss Delano inquired the significance of the stone sentinels, representing races so remote from each other.

"My museum," was the response, "is limited principally to the display of curiosities from those two nations. I have a few specimens or relics from ancient Assyria, but substantially this is an Indian and Arabic collection. I have lived so long among these two nomadic peoples, and studied so thoroughly their peculiarities, that I have traced resemblances which identify the two in my mind. The Arabs of the desert and the citizens of the prairies are both wanderers, having no permanent homes, and carrying their dwellings with them wherever they go. The physical resemblance between the Arabian deserts and the prairie *mesas* at once attracted my attention. Both races are the most wonderful horsemen in the world. The principal property of the wanderers of the East is horses and camels, and the inhabitants of the Western plains own little besides horses and

mules. A striking similarity exists in their political organization. The Bedawees, or Bedouins, recognize as heads of their tribes *sheikhs*, in whose families the government is hereditary. But the individual who succeeds to the vacancy must be elected. If the ruler or chief causes dissatisfaction, they abandon him and choose another. The nomads of the New World are governed by a chief, whose office also is hereditary. When by folly or cowardice his influence is weakened they depose him and select one more competent. Both races are freebooters, and regard robbery from strangers as honorable employment. The laws of hospitality are rigidly observed by both."

He was interrupted at this point by the exclamations of the party at the scene displayed to them by the opening of the inner door. They were in the presence of Arabian chiefs, women, and children, Indian warriors, Comanches, Kioways, Witchitas, Wacos, Kechies, and Quapaws, each standing in the dress and ornaments of the tribe. The wooden images had been elaborately fashioned, with features and complexion perfectly delineating the characteristics of their respective clans. For a moment they possessed all the reality of life, gazing with their wild eyes towards the intruders, and their lances and weapons seemed on the point of bathing in Christian blood. It was a fearful gathering of armed rovers and wild savages, and at that instant a terrible cry echoed through the museum, chilling the thrilled blood. It was the *warwhoop* that precedes the massacre and the scalping-knife. So perfectly was it given by the proprietor of the place that Miss Delano started and clutched the arm of the French officer. Immediately all joined in the laugh at her expense, the gentleman to whose arm she had instinctively clung ejaculating, "*N'ecoutez-vous pas les hommes?*"

They passed on down the great hall, replete with every geological specimen and ornithological image that could vivify or illustrate the desert or the prairie. The departments of natural history were perfect, — every beast, bird, and reptile standing immovably in his stuffed skin, a permanent illustration of the science and research of their collector. The heiress involuntarily turned to study the face of the man. Was it within the range of probability that one so gifted, so admirable in his taste, so courteous, so endowed with learning and self-command, had incurred the penalty

Cain announced as his own: "And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me"? And then came to her recollection lines from the pages of *Iconoclast*. "Wealth and power are the false idols of men. Better is the pure crystal rivulet of the mountain side, that, unsullied and refreshing, satisfies the thirst of the traveller, than the roaring torrent that moves in power, but bears upon its bosom the wrecks of happy homes and the stolen labor of humble hands. Purity often is found with humility in solitude, but in the crowded haunts of men it is a rare and precious pearl. But it is a true idol whose worship is sanctioned by Heaven." The words of that strange book were ever rising upon her memory, and the glorious face of their author had photographed itself upon her consciousness forever. He was struggling, weary and heavy laden, along the highway of life, and still the more hopeless and incessant the toil the brighter beamed his faith in God and purity and right. This was the ideal man. She knew in the depths of her intellect that no true follower of the Nazarene could be indifferent to the cause of the poor and the struggling. True religion looks to wealth as the instrument only to aid poverty, that poverty which suffers for bread and which chains the intellect that would labor for truth. She turned then with increased vigor to the study of this coryphæus of elegant irreligion and aimless science. The discrimination of her character could not be blinded by his accomplishments, nor her senses dazzled by the luxury and display that attested his wealth and taste. Her suspicions whispered of crime, and she watched every movement of the man and every object in his recluse sanctuary with the earnestness of virtue and the quiet composure of tact.

At length her watchfulness was rewarded by a spark of light. After a prolonged and entertaining examination of the cabinets, enlivened by the brilliant explanations of the owner, the party naturally enough became scattered, each one pursuing investigations in the various departments. Montrose Earle was busily engaged in conversation with the French officer, and Miss Delano wandered off to a library of Arabic books and rare tomes from the countries of the Orient. Opening one of the glass doors, she took down a small volume, whose contents she was no more able to de-

cipher than she was the emblem of the Deity in the palace at Nimroud. Upon the fly-leaf was written in ink: —

"I send you this, hoping your more extensive acquirements will enable you to comprehend it. To me it is only a procession of crows, fish-hooks, and negroes.

"Yours, J. H. N."

That mysterious being again! Who could he be? She pored over that fragment with terrible earnestness, — every word, every letter, stamping itself upon her consciousness, never to be eradicated. It was assuredly the same writing as that in the note appointing the interview in the rooms of Earle. She could not mistake that formation of the letters. It was a novel form of handwriting, chaining the memory from its peculiarities. But she had seen it a third time. Where? Up and down the vistas of the Past flew her thoughts. She pressed the handle of her parasol between her eyebrows and closed her eyes in study. The peculiarities of handwriting passed and repassed before her mental vision. Was it the same as in any note that had reached her from her many admirers or suitors for her hand? No! That question was quickly decided. It came to her at last. There could be no doubt; St. Luke's! The "Christian Year." *Robert Melville!* The handwriting was the same. Could the missing relative of Lord Carnochan be *J. H. N.?* Might not *J. H. N.* have written Melville's name for him at some time in that "Christian Year"? That fact was possible, not probable. The donor generally writes the donee's name in a book, or the donee writes it himself. If J. H. N. and Robert Melville were the same person, and Melville had been secretly made way with, what was the "Christian Year" doing in the possession of Constant Earle? In the event of a murder being made out, what would be the legal interpretation of this possession? Would not suspicion fall upon the younger brother? The mental reply came: "No more justly than upon Montrose Earle, for he held both book and letter, the latter found in his own apartments and mentioning a midnight interview, probably identical with the night of the murder-cry." Constant's position was much the safer of the two. Was it? He held a book that manifestly was not a gift to him. Montrose Earle's possession of a book was evidently legal. J. H. N. had presented it to him. But

that single fact, the possession of the "Christian Year," was the only possible cause of suspicion against Constant Earle. The accumulation of facts pointed to his brother, provided J. H. N. and Robert Melville were identical. What should be her next step? Should she inform Lord Carnochan of the similarity of the handwriting? Undoubtedly; but a preliminary move was requisite. She might never gain access to the museum again. The book might be removed. She would call in another witness to the fact of the existence of the volume and the peculiarity of the handwriting. She called to Miss Deming, who was amusing herself in the inspection of a case of vases of glazed green pottery, copper mirrors, and copper spoons, ornaments of agate, cornelian, and amethyst, found in an Assyrian tomb in the mound near Mosul. When her friend came to the library she exhibited to her the curious hieroglyphics in the book, and called her attention particularly to a representation of a human figure with the head and wings of an eagle, having three daggers in his belt. Having fixed the memory of that particular book in her friend's mind, she remarked upon the peculiarity of the English handwriting on the fly-leaf. They both concurred in the anomalous character of the chirography. After a further inspection of the library, she passed down the museum, and the proprietor advanced with a smile to meet her. She looked him directly in the eyes as she asked abruptly, "Did you ever know Robert Melville, an English gentleman?"

Not a passing twinge of conscience ruffled the bland countenance of the man. He was neither startled nor thrilled by the utterance of that name. With the same serene affability of manner that characterized him ever in her presence, he answered: —

"No. I never heard the name. Was his name suggested by anything in my museum?"

She was amazed. Was it just or generous to continue suspicious of a gentleman so composed in the utterance of a name which had gone out in blood? He possessed every external evidence of innocence. She was baffled. She turned away to a cabinet of minerals, remarking, "He was a traveller, not of any repute that I am aware of. I thought possibly you might have met him. But tell me, Mr. Earle, where did you find this yellowish-gray sandstone, with fossil ferns?"

He followed her to the case, and, inspecting it, said: —

"You will find everything labelled. See! it is from the Brazos River. The fossil ferns in this formation belong to 'the carboniferous era.'"

"It is marvellous to me, Mr. Earle, how you can burden your memory with so many facts in every department of science and never have that mental draught-horse shirk his load. I have never known your memory fail to honor all drafts drawn upon it."

"The memory, Miss Delano, is susceptible of the highest cultivation, and in a healthy condition of the physical system an ordinary power of memory may be taught wonderful retentiveness. As the mariner by the constant exercise of the organ of vision can discover objects at twice the distance that you or I can, so one whose occupation requires retentiveness of various facts will greatly surpass ordinary observers. I consider one of the principal objects of early education to be the training of the memory. The bent of the moral twig of youth determines the inclination of the manly tree, to vary the common proverb, and so the extent of training given to the youthful memory determines the capacity of the adult mind to retain facts. Of course there are exceptions. The memories of some people are like the buckets of the daughters of Danaus; they retain not one drop."

"I would like to present a draft upon your theological memory, if you have turned your attention at any time to this particular department."

"Try me, Miss Delano. I am not expected to know everything. Indeed, I feel very much in the dissatisfied condition of Faust. Age creeps rapidly on, and I know nothing yet."

"Be careful not to commit his error, and in your discontent sell your soul to Hades."

She laughed with him, and then continued: —

"You are aware, to some extent, of the difficulty under which churchmen are laboring at present in this country and England."

"I know all churches are always laboring under some difficulty. I realize fully that Christ announced his mission to be the distribution of swords, and not ploughshares."

"I do not wish you to speak irreverently to me."

"Certainly not," was the response; "I only paraphrase the original."

"I would like you to give me your idea of the existence of an apostolic church in Britain."

"I do not believe it at all, Miss Delano. It is unsupported by proof. The claim is based upon the fanciful interpretation of doubtful passages in ancient writers. It cannot stand at all according to the usual tests of historical verification."

"What do you deduce from your theological studies as to the origin of the first British church? When do records first announce it?"

"Beda, the Anglo-Saxon, in his writings, informs us that in the reign of Aurelius, when Eleutherius was Pope, between the years 177 and 181, King Lucius, the extent of whose jurisdiction in Britain is not stated, sent messengers to the Bishop of Rome requesting that he might be enrolled among Christians. The Pope sent missionaries, who baptized Lucius and preached the gospel. The chroniclers of that country give the names of those missionaries as Elvan, Fagan, Medwin, and Damian. Rees states that near Landaff were four churches, named Llearwg, or Lucius, Dyfan, Ffagan, and Medwy No one knows when they were founded, but their existence seems to add plausibility to the statement that Lucius reigned in that vicinity. The whole story of Beda is doubtful; for at the distance of five centuries he wrote, and who knows his authorities? Corroboration of his statement appears to exist, from the fact that after the time of the baptism of Lucius continental writers commence to enumerate Britain among Christian nations."

"But, Mr. Earle, history has given us the names of two British Christians in the first century, Claudia and Pomponia Græcina."

"Very true. The Scripture tells us that Claudia, wife of Pudens, at Rome, was a Christian. Martial states that Claudia was a Briton; that is to say, a Claudia who was the wife of the Senator Pudens. It is a coincidence, and the inference is likely to be true. Græcina, however, is conjectured to have been a Briton because her husband had been Governor of Britain, and because she was charged with having practised a foreign superstition. This, all admitted, proves nothing as to the establishment of a church there; for these women lived in Rome, and may have become Christians there."

"But the Roman power gained a firm footing in that island

as early as the year 43, and among the influx of strangers there might have been Christians. There must have been."

"That is not the correct way of writing history, Miss Delano. There might *not* have been also; and, while there is a possibility of this negative, you cannot make history. There might have been Christian arrivals, and yet no church have been established, no clergyman, no house of worship."

"Very well; go on," she said. "What comes after Beda's statement?"

"History takes a leap of more than one hundred years then, and states simply that the Christians throughout the land were given up to the Pagan priests, during the persecutions of the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, in the beginning of the fourth century. They were driven to caverns and the wilderness and perished of want and suffering; the churches were razed to the earth. Three names only are preserved, Julius, Aaron, and Alban of Verulam."

"Ah! yes, I have heard of him. Our St. Alban's in New York City is named in his honor."

"Exactly. Your little church, which is creating such a hubbub there, revives the memory of him, who is styled by natives and foreigners 'The Proto-martyr of Britain.'"

"Go on. Enlighten me about that saint."

"Gildas and Beda state that he was a citizen of Verulam, sheltered a Christian priest hunted for his life, listened to his teachings, and when the retreat of the priest was discovered, in order to save him, donned his vestments and rushed out to meet the soldiers. He declared himself a Christian, refused to sacrifice to the gods, and was scourged and beheaded on a small hill outside the walls, in the year 305. A church was erected over his body long after, which was destroyed by the pagan Saxons, and the ruins were visited by pilgrims to obtain miraculous cures through his intercession. Later authorities state that King Offa built there the magnificent abbey of St. Alban's in 793."

"In what age did Gildas write, Mr. Earle?"

"He was a Briton, and wrote in 550. The Anglican church obtained peace upon the accession of Constantine to the empire in 313. The British bishops were represented in the councils of Arles in 314 Sardica in 347, and Rimini in 359. Celestine, Bishop of Rome, to oppose the heresy of Pelagius, sent Germanus of Auxerre in his name to Britain, to preach against it. The triumph of Orthodoxy was complete, and

Germanus, before he left the island, visited the tomb of St. Alban, and deposited there a box of relics brought from Gaul, and took a handful of dust from the grave of that saint to place in a new church at Auxerre which he dedicated to St. Alban. Beda makes this statement. Your little church in New York, Miss Delano, has a veritable saint for its patron. Germanus was sent a second time, and with him Severus of Treves, and the teachers of Pelagianism, who were condemned to banishment, left the island in the custody of Germanus. Erric, Beda, and Constantius are the authorities for these statements. This is substantially all the information that can be gleaned of the Anglican church during the first five centuries. This imperfect knowledge does not come from national and authentic documents, so says Gildas; for there are no such in existence. Passing allusions in the works of foreign historians are all that remain. But we have the fact that the Anglican bishops sat in the general councils abroad. The presumption, therefore, is, they held a common faith with the rest of the Christian world. Gildas, a native, informs us of what was believed in his own times, 550, — the doctrine of the Trinity; the redemption by Christ; that the hierarchy were bishops, priests, and other ministers; that the hands of the bishops and priests were anointed and blessed; that they were the successors of St. Peter; that they occupied his seat, and could bind and unloose like him; that it was their duty to offer sacrifice, and 'to stretch out their hands at the most holy sacrifices of Christ;' that the Britons had monasteries, under abbots, whose monks made vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity; that widows made vows of continence; that churches built in honor of the martyrs had several altars for heavenly sacrifices in each; that the service was chanted by the clergy, and oaths of peace and forgiveness were made on the altars; that the church service was performed in the Latin language, and that the clergy were celibates by the third canon of the Council of Nice."

"And this was all held by the Britons, Mr. Earle, before the Saxon conquest established the worship of Woden?"

"Unquestionably. Refer carefully at any time to the authorities I have named for these facts. The true rule is first to know who the historians of a country were in the earliest times, and then to read them yourself. Then you ascertain facts. History is often falsified for political and sectarian purposes; therefore read the *earliest* historians when you

can, and draw your own deductions. We should have a queer time with geology if we admitted the speculations of every writer upon it. We want to see the rocks ourselves, and a great many rocks at that. Take statements upon trust when you cannot help it, but shove past statements when the real thing is accessible."

"Have you ever discovered in your readings any account of the manner of constructing the early churches of England?"

"The accounts in the writings of the Anglo-Saxon writers," was the reply, "are very meagre. The Scots built of split oak roofed with reeds. A specimen of this style remained lately in the church of Greenstead in Essex. The trunks of oak trees were sawed down the middle for the church walls; the halves were cut away at the bottom into a tenon, and were inserted in a groove cut in a horizontal timber, which answered for the base sustainment. Another horizontal timber, grooved like the first, received by way of entablature the tops of the trunks. The trunks stood with their sawed faces inward and one inch apart. At the gable ends the trunks rose gradually pedimentwise to fourteen feet in height. Beda informs us that the wind and rain were excluded by plastering them with mortar made of clay, earth, and moss. Eadbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, removed the reeds from the church built by the Bishop Finan, and covered roof and walls with sheet lead. The Roman missionaries introduced the Roman fashion of stone churches. The churches noticed by the most ancient Saxon writers were square or quadrilateral. The earliest cruciform church is mentioned by Ethelwold, who wrote about the year 810. The organ was in use among the Anglo-Saxons shortly after their conversion. It is certain they were known to St. Aldhelm at the end of the seventh century, for he refers to them in the poem, 'De Laudibus Virginitatis.'

"'Maxima Millenis auscultans organa flabris
Mulceat auditum ventosis follibus iste,
Quamvis auratis fulgescant cætera capsis.'"

Their conversation was interrupted at this point by the appearance of Miss Deming and the officer, who had been roving about the museum together, and had arrived at the conclusion that it was time to bring their visit to an end.

"What has become of your favorite servant, Saad?" in-

quired the Frenchman. "I have looked in vain for that worthy every place. Is he absent?"

"Yes; I have entrusted him with a mission to his native land. He may return to me within the year. He is almost indispensable to me in my zoölogical department, and indeed in everything. But I wanted some things for 'Silvicola,' and he was the only one I could rely upon in the matter."

"I remember him very well," said the officer. "He accompanied us through Persia, and fought gallantly against that thieving band of Koords who sought to plunder us. He is a faithful man, Monsieur Earle."

"He is my *feraj-bashe*, as they say in Persia," was the response. "I can always leave everything under his charge."

"We are much indebted to you for your courtesy, Mr. Earle," said Miss Delano. "We must return now to 'Sublimity,' where we should be happy to receive a call from you. 'Silvicola' is a marvel for this land, and we shall ever cherish pleasant memories of this visit."

When the party had at length regained their seats in the carriage, and were rolling away through the spacious park, the heiress endeavored to analyze the feelings Montrose Earle had excited in her mind. Again had her instinct been utterly at fault. No indication of guilt lurked about this singularly gifted being. It was manifest he never had seen such a person as Robert Melville. Under her startling interrogatory he had evidenced calmness too natural to admit of further suspicion. Either he was innocent of crime or J. H. N. was a different person from Melville. Again reason whispered of suspending her cruel verdict. Perhaps at the hour of the murder-cry the owner of that dwelling was far away. Give the suspected the benefit of the doubt, whispered charity. But a woman's suspicion once aroused is as firm and constant as her love once engaged. It requires cyclopean powers to eradicate either.

Chapter XXX.

For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee.

PROVERBS XXV.

A COUNTRY church-yard, shaded by evergreens and weeping willows, was deserted one evening early in the autumn. It was Sunday, and through the open windows of the chapel close at hand the murmur of voices engaged in the evening service came distinctly over the graves where slumbered the friends and relatives of the worshippers. It was a pleasant and familiar haunt, this cleanly and shaded cemetery, to many of the congregation who were wont on the afternoons of Sundays to wander here with their familiars, or to retire to quiet shadows in the more remote portions of the grounds and meditate upon the departed, or study the books of religious meditation which the zealous pastor was ever distributing among his flock. The chapel was small, but exquisitely tasteful in its Gothic style, with climbing vines wreathing the arched windows, or clustering in dense masses of green upon the sides of the square tower. It had been erected especially for the affluent families of the adjacent country, whose residence away from the city extended only to three or four months of the warm season; but a sufficient rural congregation gathered there for worship during the winter months to justify its being open the entire year.

The day for the more elegant portion of this flock to return to the metropolis had not yet arrived, and the chapel was thronged upon this autumnal evening in consequence of the announcement that the bishop of the diocese would preach. It was singular, then, that one, evidently a churchman, from the book under his arm, should loiter so late under the trees of the cemetery after the sounds from the chapel had announced the opening of the evening service Farther and farther progressed the solemnities of worship, and still he manifested no disposition to cease his meditation and enter the church, but lingered on in sadness and silence beside a large enclosure whose tasteful hedge and elegant monuments indicated the graves of an affluent family. He

was leaning over the hedge, and studying the inscriptions upon the marbles, and at times expressions of intense agony would cross his fair face, and then he would start at the sounds issuing from the chapel windows as if duty was calling him away from the indulgence of his grief.

At length, as if his final resolution was taken, he cleared the hedge at a single leap, and seating himself upon the step of a monument which bore the name, "Gertrude Earle," he opened his prayer-book, and soon detecting by the familiar sounds in the chapel the place for him to begin, endeavored to follow the service. But the anguish was too intense Every sound from the sacred edifice recalled the sleeper under the monument, and he bowed his head at length upon the closed book, and moaned in agony of spirit. One voice so sweet and earnest in the responses was silent forever; one heart warm in the service of God was still; one face so eloquent at the hour of prayer was frozen in death. There beneath him mouldered the dust of one who in every relation of life honored God. She first had clasped his infant hands and raised them to heaven; she first taught him that sweetest of all names, which comes like solemn music to the desolate and weary heart. Ah, had that precious sleeper never instructed him in the faith, how many times would he have faltered and gone down in the midst of his agony! She had saved him from the wine-cup, from self-destruction, from dishonor. When the fiend of the outcast and the struggling had whispered to him of ease and peace, the sweet eyes of that mother had beamed before him in their purity, and that sweetest of all human voices had returned to him in the favorite hymn, "I shall be satisfied there." He had clung to that memory in the trial hours, and it had saved him. No recollections of father, brother, sister, or friend would have been adequate in the intensity of his anguish. Born to suffer and to enjoy intensely, far beyond the capacities of his race, he had descended to the fearful depths of mental suffering whose horrors are known only to the chosen few, and there a soft, kind hand had touched him, and a well-known murmur of gentleness had spoken those thrilling, loving words, "My poor, dear boy!" He had arisen and followed that touch and that gentle voice, and they led him to the foot of the cross. Panoplied in the armor of her memory he had conquered the foul fiend. At the trial hour he recalled the last sad parting, the pale, thin face of the dying mother, and the promises

he had made to follow her into the pure presence of God, He could not trample upon that memory, that sweet face; and God had aided him. That appreciation of the beautiful and the holy, which was his birthright, had idealized the face of his mother. Her face must be the face of every angel and pure spirit, and he could not by sin forever sever himself from the enjoyment of such presences and such ideals of beauty. When the brain had grown weary and then given out; when the red sheets had fallen before his overtaxed eyes; when the nerves had commenced their diversified torture, and the fearful sense of loneliness and desertion had come on to overwhelm him, he had turned to that sacred memory, and that memory led him to God, and there by the holy and precious promise is ever found rest for the weary and heavy-laden. The Eternal had not deserted him. He had been purified by suffering, but strength to endure had been given him, and he *realized* at times that purification through anguish. He knew at times that his intellect was clearer, more powerful, and, though the future was gloomy enough, he realized that he had shaken off earth-weights. His ideal was more exalted. He was conscious that he had approached nearer to the character of his lost mother. He could endure more patiently; and this is progress. He could sacrifice more of self; and this is Christ-like. He could now look at intervals with calmness upon the proposition, "I may win high heaven if I cannot win high honor on its footstool."

He had risen again from every depressing fall of spirits by the consciousness that his mother's eyes watched him from beside the throne of God; that the All-Powerful regarded him in pity, and that some day Heaven would reward his arduous struggles in this life, or beyond the grave compensate him for his stern and unyielding pursuit of duty. He had passed the morning of this holy day in the chapel. Where once he had occupied a seat of honor and of prosperity with the loved and the lost, he quietly stole into a remote pew, hoping to be unseen and unknown. He had returned again for the evening service; for well he knew that often was sung, at that hour, a hymn composed by his mother. She had ever been the benefactress of that chapel; and her memory was like a whisper of far-off holy music to the worshippers. But, when the recollection of that hymn, and the possibility of its being sung at that evening service,

came to him so touchingly, as he stood before the Gothic entrance, he feared the loss of his self-control, and wandered away to her grave to conceal his emotion. There had he lingered until it was too late to enter the church; and beside her grave he had vowed anew the consecration of his aims and objects in life to the honor of God. He whispered again, in his loneliness and his grief, his promises to live worthy of that memory, and to forbear all malice and envy, and to suffer and struggle patiently unto the end.

In the midst of his holy resolves the trial came. The bushes behind him shook violently. They parted, and a short, muscular man stood confronting him. For the first time in a year the brothers stood face to face. Constant Earle rose at once, and, with the exclamation "Brother!" offered his hand over the hedge. It was silently refused. Montrose Earle stood gazing at him for a moment with a stern, vindictive look. Then he spoke: "There never can be terms between us until you comply with my request. Will you, or will you not, give me the picture?"

As he spoke he glanced over the figure of his brother from head to foot. He saw the marks of his struggle with poverty plainly enough. That magnificent frame which rose above his own in the perfect glory of manhood, and the refined elegance and grace of the gentleman, was poorly clad, neatly; that was all. His eye kindled with triumph at the sight. Constant must be amply humiliated and tamed by this time to submit to any terms with wealth and influence. The younger brother responded calmly and with admirable self-control, fixing his large, eloquent, blue eye upon his senior: —

"I am neither too proud nor too cold, Montrose, to be reasonable. For my only brother I would do almost anything for the sake of her who sleeps here. But I cannot yield up to you her picture. She gave it to me, and desired me to preserve it forever in memory of her. That I shall do, by the help of God. I will serve you in any other way; but I have told you over and over again that I *cannot* relinquish that into your hands. You have everything, and every other picture of our mother except that. Why do you insist upon taking that from me?"

"Because it is of incalculable benefit to me, as I have told you over and over again. I do not choose to specify why. There is ample reason why I should not. Give me the

picture, and I will place you directly in independent circumstances. You must be a madman to refuse any longer. Give it to me, and trust my word for the rest."

"I cannot part with it. It is a sacred trust." The reply was calm, but firm. It admitted no opportunity for farther parley.

"Come out of that lot, then," was the fierce reply.

"By what right do you make such a demand?"

"By the right of ownership. That lot was the property of my father, and by his will he gave it to me. Come out of it at once, or I shall take measures to put you out."

"And would you tear me from the grave of my mother?"

"Yes. That is the poetical way of expressing ejectment. Come out."

Constant Earle stood an instant in reflection. Physically speaking, it was no easy matter to dispossess him of his position. He knew his own muscular superiority. The outrage of the demand was uppermost in his mind. It was possibly legal. It was certainly atrocious; in fact, without necessity and without excuse. The Earle blood within him bade him resist. The promptings of Christianity whispered of peace. He stood an instant longer in indecision. The brother who had faced the wounded lion of Africa was not one to be intimidated by manifestation of superior muscle. True, genuine pluck never pauses at such obstacles. He shot out a terrible blow, in aid of his demand, with his right arm, which struck Constant in the face, causing him to reel backward. In an instant the insulted cleared the hedge, and, with a wild gleam of the eyes, confronted the insulter. The blood mounted to his face, and chastisement was plainly written there. The lion of a dozen gymnasiums had been struck, and Montrose Earle knew it. Hark! A swell of the distant organ broke over the silence; it rose louder and sweeter upon the air, and the human voices joining wafted the song heavenward. It was the mother's hymn. They had remembered the lovely and the gentle who had flown to the bosom of her Lord and Master; and, worshipping upon earth, their song was carried to her in heaven. Ah! Heaven, Peace, Rest, Home: the Home of the pure, the gentle, the holy, the forgiving. The wing of his angel-mother brushed his burning, heated cheek. His clinched hand relaxed, his eye softened, and whispering, with trembling lips, "I forgive you," he turned away to conceal his emotion. With a bitter

sneer, and the epithet "coward" upon his lips, Montrose turned and walked away. But louder and sweeter and holier chimed the notes of the organ floating upwards to that city whose gates are pearls, and "shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there." No doubt, as the accents of praise were wafted through those portals, there stole in with them the whispered words of forgiveness as a sweet and touching memorial before the throne of God.

The man, softened to the gentleness of childhood by a mother's memory and the thought of heaven, passed slowly out to the highway by a side gate; but the master of "Silvicola" left by the public entrance near the church door. Two splendid steeds awaited his coming; but he manifested no anxiety to unloose them, and stood patting their silken coats and admiring their admirable points for many minutes. Elegant equipages of various styles were waiting near the church door. The gentry of the surrounding country were represented, and many a family coach or polished "Clarence" was reflecting the country sun, which knew the windings of "Central Park," or the rocky pavement of Fifth Avenue. At intervals in the service pealed out the notes of the organ, and then all was still. Then came a shuffling of many feet, the opening of doors, and the fluttering forth of ribbons and silks and muslins, till the lawn before the church was alive with the faces of the beautiful, the aged, and the young. A white-robed sylph glided forth and was immediately joined by a feeble, but elegant lady, who leaned upon her arm and entered her carriage with her. Two others occupied the front seat, and the vehicle whirled away. It was Miss Delano and her guests. Her familiar, Miss Deming, was lifted to her seat in a glistening buggy by the strong arm of the master of "Silvicola," and flew away after two dark-coated Arabians. Their owner had promised to drive her from the church across the river to "Sublimity."

The owner of the black steeds with the frontal mark of a white star was far ahead. The sun had dropped suddenly behind the western hills, and the protecting parasols were dropped also. Miss Delano was commenting upon the bishop's discourse in response to the remarks of Mrs. Deming, when she was startled by sudden cries from the occupants of the vehicle just behind her. She turned quickly, and a cry of distress escaped her lips. The master of "Silvicola" had lost control of his horses, and they were running

away with him and her friend Carrie. They plunged frantically alongside her carriage, dashed into her horses, and flung them to one side of the highway, and then madly dashed along, tearing and scattering whatever crossed their path. One glimpse informed her that the reins were broken, and that her friend was deathly pale, and both were lost. They were gone in an instant, and ruin marked their flight. Away on to the northward a dense, whirling cloud of dust marked their career, but a sudden turn would soon fling them lifeless to the earth. They had evidently reached the densely populated portion of the village, when a sudden cry was heard, and then a cheer wildly rang out upon the air. What could that mean? The black steeds were put to their speed, and they hurried on to the midst of the confusion and the cheering. They entered the excited crowd, and heard the joyful cry, "They are saved — all right — they are saved!" They reached at last the shattered vehicle, and found Miss Deming beside it on her feet, and the owner also unhurt. When the ungovernable and frantic steeds were just sweeping around to an embankment upon the river's edge, a young man had recklessly bounded to their side, flung himself upon their backs with the agility of an acrobat, and, climbing to their heads, had caught them by their broken reins, and clung and swung there, with his entire weight upon their jaws, till they paused abruptly, and then commenced plunging frantically to rid themselves of him. Others then found courage to run to his assistance, and they were secured. It was quickly and nobly done; and then, with a bow to the occupants of the shattered vehicle, he had walked away hatless and hurriedly. Miss Deming, as she clung about her friend's neck in excitement, exclaimed, "It was that gentleman from St. Luke's Hospital that saved us. He would not stop, but hurried away. O May, he clung to those horses like a tiger! He saved our lives, and he is the bravest man living. Is he not, Mr. Earle?"

The heiress turned to the person appealed to, and found him standing like one bewildered, but he answered slowly, "It was the most perfect heroism I ever witnessed, quickly conceived, and executed like lightning. We were close on death." He turned away to look after his horses. He was too brave himself not to acknowledge the heroism of another, even though that other was his insulted and outcast brother. He watched a favorable moment, when all were

engaged in animated conversation over the escape, and beckoning to a well-known acquaintance in the crowd, took him aside and whispered, "Did you notice that man who saved us?"

"I did, and noticed that he walked away very rapidly."

"Would you be likely to recognize his face again?"

"I seldom forget a face that has once attracted my notice. I never could forget *his* face. He was a splendid-looking fellow."

"He cannot have gone far yet. Find him if you can, and ascertain his residence. I must know where he lives. Do not take your eyes off that man until you track him to some home, even if you have to follow him to New York. I will compensate you for every expense and trouble you may be at."

"All right, Mr. Earle. I will attend to it, and write you here, or return from the city myself. I am on a trail now of a defaulter."

"Very well. You had better follow now, as he turned down that street."

"Oh, I saw him, sir. I was on that corner when he passed. He went a little way out of the crowd and then commenced spitting blood. I fear he was hurt, and no wonder."

"Ah! take this money then, and make some excuse for helping him if he needs a physician. But follow him up to his home, and report to me. If you can track him, it will be one of the most profitable jobs you ever undertook for any man. You know me."

"All right, sir;" and the detective hurried away. He was one of the most crafty and untiring employés of the New York police force.

The heiress watched every movement of the lord of "Silvicola." She alone of her party knew that the rescuer was his brother. She detected his self-possession and his evident desire to ignore the identity of the man who had saved him. Determined upon pursuing the thread of her purpose to the end, she retained her policy of caution and silence regarding the facts of which she was possessed. She was anxious, however, to be of service to the disowned, when so simple a matter as a suggestion might aid him, and so she turned finally to Montrose Earle, and remarked: —

"If this young man is of humble life and poor, you will

of course reward him in some way for the risk of his life. I mention this subject, as my friend, Miss Deming, has just informed me that she will appeal to her father to hunt out and reward this gallant fellow for the rescue."

"Please beg her to desist, Miss Delano. I regard this matter purely as my own affair. I shall send this man my check for ten thousand dollars at the proper time."

The thought flashed to her mind that through this occurrence she might ascertain the residence of the disowned, and thereby afford Lord Carnochan an opportunity to unravel the mystery of the name in the "Christian Year," as well as obtain the access to Constant Earle, regarding which she and her uncle had been foiled by his abrupt departure from St. Luke's.

"You will then," she said, "of course notify Miss Deming when you have ascertained who and where he is, that she may at least make some personal acknowledgment of his services in saving her life? She will expect this."

This question was a serious annoyance to the master of "Silvicola." He dared not refuse, and yet the bringing together of his brother and Miss Deming, and very likely also her friend, might lead to disclosures which would embarrass him, not only regarding his indomitable purpose to gain possession of the mother's picture, but also regarding the heiress, in whose good graces he was anxious to stand high. Miss Delano might not be able to comprehend why one son was floating in affluence on the stream of life, while the other was struggling barely to keep his head above the surface; why one without wife or children, and yet the owner of millions, could allow his only brother to live in a garret. The mistress of "Sublimity" had ensnared him in her fascinations. His world-wide experience with the sex had not saved him from the magic of that eye and the charm of those accomplishments. He already had considered favorably an alliance with the house of Delano. He had entered upon the difficult experiment of taming the pride and winning the heart of "the beautiful aristocrat." She had already beaten him in his favorite exercise, horsemanship. This only whetted his appetite for victory. His iron will had already planned the recovery of the lost ground. He intended every move on the hymeneal chess-board should hereafter tell. It was requisite, therefore, that the heiress should not be manifestly thwarted in her first request. He would promise to

facilitate the interview, and then deceive her as to his ability to effect it. The rescuer would mysteriously fail to be unearthed from his retreat. After an instant's reflection, he responded that it was manifest the young man desired to be unknown, as he had hastened away in the most mysterious manner. However, every device would be resorted to for the discovery of his whereabouts, and in the event of success she and her friend should be notified. And thus they parted, — Miss Deming taking a seat in her friend's carriage, and Mr. Earle remaining to look after his shattered buggy and demoralized steeds.

The heiress rolled away with the pleasing reflection that a large check was to be drawn in favor of the disowned, and his pathway to honor and literary reputation brightened. But the remarkable reticence of Montrose Earle regarding his brother, even on the occasion of his rescue from death, when one would imagine fraternal instinct would assert itself in recognition, confirmed her prejudice against the suspected murderer. The warm, poetic heart of the girl had been aroused by the eloquence and pathos of "Murmurs from the Deep Sea." The soul of the author was apparent in his book. "Iconoclast" shattered popular idols, but in their stead erected images of beauty, tenderness, and purity, which found prepared niches in her heart. She longed to know him, encourage his pursuit of letters, and, out of the sheer sympathy of a generous nature, reinstate him among the scenes and honors of his youthful home.

Chapter XXII.

Dimmi con chi tu vai, sapro chel che fai.
ITALIAN PROVERB.

Dime con quien andas, direte quien eres.
SPANISH PROVERB.

THE autumnal moon illumined the windows of a humble dwelling in the metropolis. The rays flooded in through the glass upon a brother and sister enjoying the brief hour of companionship allowed them from the incessant calls of

business and daily toil. The brother's hand held the small, white wrist of the other in his caressing way, as he said, "You have not yet given up that habit of midnight crying, Lou. It distresses me to find ever those weary, contracted eyes, when I call."

"You imagine more than you see, brother; you have no very exalted idea of my self-control. Do you think no one except yourself can bear with composure, poverty and deprivation of elegant and literary indulgences? You do me injustice."

"You cannot deceive me, Lou. You bear up like a Spartan under adversity. The mere loss of comforts, such as we have been accustomed to, you do not appear to chafe under. But there is something deeper than this to trouble you; do not protest. I have watched you too earnestly and too long not to know that some grief is wearing away upon your heartstrings, and that the secret will never be entrusted to your brother. Lou, for the sake of our lost mother, confide in me! You do not know what powers of relief a brother's heart and a brother's will are capable of! But I cannot endure this silent anguish, this superhuman control of agony when I am near, which I am assured, by my sense of sight, breaks forth into piteous tears when I am gone. Oh, let me help you, I beg of you, I entreat of you!"

The words of tenderness aroused her. As she turned her fair face towards him the moonbeams glorified it.

"Constant, you have been my angel. Next to the word of God I value your counsel. You have divested yourself of every comfort, that the scanty pittance of your earnings might secure me some luxury I did not require. I have known that from the first; I did not remonstrate, for I knew it would be only wasted words; and then I knew it afforded you more satisfaction than it would to have expended it upon yourself. A woman's wants are not very extensive. My wages support me,—pay my board, and clothe me,—and your hard-earned dollars are surplusage to me. But you are my dearest brother, and you can do just as you please. But when you seek to explore the hidden mysteries of my heart, you encounter on the threshold—I may as well inform you now—an insurmountable hydra. Constant, I have a secret, which, in ordinary circumstances, you should know before any other; you should know it now [illegible] power to gratify you. But once for all I will

assure you that I am bound, by a solemn promise, to retain that secret until a certain contingency shall release me. I beg of you to respect my promise."

"I shall never allude to it again, sister." After a brief silence he added, "Why, do you think, am I so persecuted by Montrose to yield up that picture to him?"

"Has he importuned you again?"

"Yes; last summer, beside mother's grave, where we chanced to meet."

"It is unreasonable," was the response; "an assumption of dictatorial power. You made him no promise — gave him no encouragement?"

"I could not, sister. I promised mother to make that my palladium. She told me, at the time, that wealth and position were held ever by an uncertain tenure; that she had known the most secure and stable fortunes to be undermined in a day, but that a mother's memory was an eternal wealth. Before she handed it to me, she said, 'Will you promise never to part with it?' and I gave my word which has *never* yet been impeached."

He enunciated the last sentence with the firmness and dignity of Thrasea's response to the quæstor sent to tell him he must die: "You live in an age, when it is requisite to fortify the mind by examples of constancy."

"You never knew, Constant, that he offered me from the first a handsome competence if I would make the effort to induce you to part with the picture."

"*Never!*" was the startled response. "And you, too, are a toiler for your bread for a similar firmness to mine! O sister, this is as strange as it is cruel! What inherent value has the picture for him? He has finer likenesses, deemed by every one superior in every respect."

"I cannot fathom his motives," she said. "It is one of those whims that cannot be gratified, — and so I told him. I knew that you had given the promise, and that my interference would be wrong. A promise to a mother is inviolable, — and so I told him. He was as bitter as gall to me ever afterwards. But, oh! I forgot to tell you something. I have found among mother's letters something in regard to this very picture. I was reading them over the other night, and found, among them, a letter addressed to her, by the Greek who painted the miniature. What *was* his name?

But let me get the letter for you; I laid it aside on purpose to show you."

She hastened away to her chamber. When she returned, bearing the letter, she remarked: —

"It was painted on the brass weight, by this artist, when mother was in Greece. You remember she nursed him in his illness, — when he was dying of consumption. That was not the last attack; but, knowing that his end was near when he realized that the last hope had vanished, he sent, in grateful remembrance, this picture to her hearing that she was still in Greece. He appears to have been impressed by her beauty and goodness. See how feeble the handwriting is."

Constant Earle opened the letter and read thus: —

"My sweet, angelic Friend, — I shall soon be in that strange country of which you have so often talked. I hope I shall enter it with the love of God in my heart. You have nursed my soul and my body, and I must send you, before I die, something to recall my memory when I am gone. I have painted you, from recollection, upon this ancient fragment of brass. You will see, from the strange characters on the back of it, that it must have come down from antiquity. My father gave it to me and bade me cherish it, as some purpose of science or art might be subserved some day by the interpretation of the ancient writing upon it. I have no relatives, and leave it to you. My father was a great scholar, and desired that this should be preserved. Therefore honor his memory and mine by transmitting it to scholars or savans. It was excavated from some ruins in the island of Salamis. Farewell, lovely lady; you were gentle to me as a mother, and faithful to my eternal soul. We shall never meet again on earth; but up there, yes! up there, I trust you will meet me! You will be there. God grant that you may see there your poor

"Æschylus."

The two sat in silence for a few seconds, each absorbed in reverie. Then the brother remarked: —

"There is something mysterious in the conduct of Montrose regarding this picture. I have offered to have it copied for him by the best artist in the city if he would pay the expense of it. No; he would have my copy or none. I

imagined he might desire, as he is curious in such matters, to endeavor to decipher the hieroglyphics upon the back of it, and so I offered to make a perfect copy of them and send to him. This displeased him still more. I cannot comprehend him. He has, it appears, promised both of us independence in a pecuniary way for the simple possession of it. But I cannot part with it. The possession of that picture, and the glances I cast upon that dear face, seem ever to strengthen me for duty and toil and patience. My word is pledged to the dead. I cannot part with that gift until death reaches forth his cold arms to me. By my will that brazen voice of the past, still uninterpreted, is conveyed to my brother in fulfilment of my promise that I would keep it for life and then pass it down to a scholar. He is a noble scholar. I admire his attainments, and because he so ardently desires it I shall then give it to him. God pardon me if ever I lay any unkindness at his door! May I be forgiven as truly and really as I forgive him."

He arose to depart, but she detained him for a farewell caress. Folding those arms about him, which were beautiful enough for an empress, she entreated him to spare his health in his studies and visit her oftener.

"I feel sometimes now, dear brother, the oppression of life with greater consciousness than formerly. I cling with fervor to the cross of my Lord, but I cannot bear to be alone as patiently in the evening. Do spare time to come oftener. I return now an hour earlier from the bindery, and am then oppressed with loneliness. Have you a large school yet?"

"Yes; my day school is now full. I refused two more boys to-day. In the evening I hear the recitations of five young women in Greek, Latin, and Spanish. They are preparing for teachers or governesses."

"Don't suffer pretty eyes to make you forget your sister."

"No danger, my darling sister. None of them are beautiful as you. But one of them is very pretty and very sweet."

"Ah! I knew there was some reason for your not coming here so frequently. Who is she?"

"Nothing detains me from you, Lou, in the evening, but their instruction, and my book; it is rapidly approaching completion. This girl is an unfortunate creature. She is very ambitious, and is taking Spanish lessons from me; but she has met with an accident that has disfigured her for life.

A spirit lamp exploded near her bed, set it on fire, burned off all her hair; her forehead and cheeks and neck are frightfully marked by the flames, and she is hopelessly disfigured for life."

"And yet you think her pretty?"

"Yes; her eyes are pretty and genius-marked. Her mouth is lovely. Her nose is as regular as Grecian chisel ever traced. But she has to cover her forehead, cheeks, and neck with a white cloth and her head with a black one, which gives her the appearance of a very pretty and spiritual nun No one but a woman could ever have invented such a remedy for disfiguration. I forget her misfortunes when she is conversing or reciting, she is so amiable and earnest."

"Ah, brother, don't lose your heart to a disfigured woman. Your looks entitle you to something grand."

"Love never entered my heart, sister. I promise to come to you and lay bare the first wound."

"I shall hold you to that promise, mind."

"Very well. I promise you."

He gave her a warm embrace, pressed his lips to her pure face, and went out into the moonlight. As he passed on towards his lodgings an old man stepped out from a dark alley and followed him. The pace of the teacher was rapid and the sexagenarian quickened his own. It was no easy matter to keep within sight of one who hastened to his manuscripts, which were some day to be his source of bread. He had lost time in his fraternal visit, and the midnight was at hand. He must hasten to complete another chapter and sleep before morning, that his new pursuit of pedagogue might be followed faithfully for the interests of all concerned. Faster and faster moved his manly figure in the moonlight, and fleeter grew the steps of his aged pursuer. It was a strange spectacle, so venerable a face travelling above such nimble steps. Away on past the flying side streets he strode, and the watchful follower never lost sight of him for an instant. He turned at length northward and entered the shadow. The pursuer turned the corner in time to secure another unerring glimpse of the hastening pedestrian, so utterly unconscious that his steps were dogged. A long stretch of streets and alleys was traversed, and still the old man faltered not in his pursuit, but continued on after him. At length the teacher paused before a row of small houses, new and clean, and fitted a key to one of the doors. The

pursuer stole rapidly up to him, and before the head of the first flight of hall stairs was gained called after him:—

"Please stop, young man. I want to speak with you."

He turned suddenly and beheld the old man below in the moonlight.

"Well; speak on. I am waiting to hear you."

"You may be the man, or you may not be the man," was the response. "Here is a letter for somebody here, at this number. You had better come down and see if it's for you. It's moonlight down here, and you can read here."

He descended to the front door and received the missive. He uttered an exclamation as he read the address: "Why, that is the handwriting of Mr. Montrose Earle, and it's for me. Where did you get it?"

"He told me to bring it to this number, and give it to any one who recognized the handwriting. Otherwise, he said, bring it back. Nobody else was to have it. He wants an answer."

"Come up to my room, old man, and sit down until I can attend to it."

He passed up the stairs again, and on the second floor unlocked another door and proceeded to strike a light. The wick of the lamp caught the flame of the match, and slowly spread into a clear light. He was standing in a small school-room amid desks and chairs. He placed the lamp on a desk and looked towards the door for the advent of the messenger. It seemed as if the old man would never drag his aged frame up to the landing. Amid sighs and lumbering sounds he toiled his way upward, and finally stood in the door of the school-room. His nimble pace had deserted him. He stood tottering there in his feebleness, wrinkled and gray, his clothes wretched and his hat battered.

"Sit down, old man; you look rather feeble to be a messenger."

"I must earn my bread, you know. Thank ye, sir. I'll sit here."

He shuffled down into a chair and sat with a vacant look, waiting for the reading of the letter and the penning of the reply. But his eyes were directed to the face of the teacher, and when at length he became interested in his brother's epistle, those eyes keenly regarded him. They had become as quick in their glances as his steps had before been fleet. They noted every object in the apartment, every door, win-

dow, and shelf; then they settled upon the face of the reader. A struggle was going on there. Any novice in physiognomy could detect that. There was the bright flush and excitement of sudden joy, the revulsion of doubt, and then a settled gloom. The anxiety of weary nights was swept away in an instant. Ambition was crowned, and success stood jubilant in a halo. Instantly both were hurled to the earth and anxiety resumed the sceptre. The struggle was short, sharp, decisive. He grasped a pen from the desk and wrote: —

"My dear Brother, — Your gratitude is appreciated; but it has led you to forget that I am a man and an Earle. In the history of our family it has never been known that one of us ever accepted money for saving human life.

"Your affectionate brother,

"Constant Earle."

The messenger saw him deliberately fold up a check for *ten thousand dollars*, place it in the reply, and proceed to direct the envelope that contained both. He handed the letter to the messenger, and then sat down beside the desk listening to the aged feet making their painful descent to the street. He had flung away the publication of his book, hours of ease, the convenience of studying scientific works and classical authorities in his own room, perhaps his future. He had retained simply, *honor*. Life is practical. Was he a fool?

Slowly and tediously toiled the old man down the stairway, clattered clumsily along the hall, thumped down the single step into the street, and commenced his snail pace along the pavé. He turned, at length, a corner, glanced about him in the moonlight, saw that he was unobserved, and then walked away with the fleet, springing step of twenty. It was Fagan, the detective.

When her brother had departed, Louisa Earle took the lamp from the hall table, secured the front door, and ascended to her little room. She was a boarder in the family of her distant relatives. As she moved up the stairway the light fell upon her face. It was the spiritual countenance of the Madonna Di San Sisto. She passed noiselessly into her room, quenched the light, and sat by the window. Again the moonbeams glorified her. She fol ited

hands and looked upward to a star. But her soul knelt. She was praying. After a time her thoughts fluttered back to earth. She rested her head against the cold glass and memory returned. "Will you never come, *never?* Oh, how patiently I have waited for you; trusted you, loved you, prayed for you! You have exceeded the time so many months. The soul of honor and truth tarries long. Hush, beating heart! He will yet come. And that dream last night, how vividly God sent it to me! that dear face, so earnest, noble; those glorious eyes beaming upon me in tenderness and love. Would that every night kind Heaven would send me dreams like this, that all the weary watching and undying trust of a woman's heart might find some recompense! Ah! it is so hard to be always patient, always trusting in the goodness of God, when no reward comes and he stays away from me so long. Not one clasp of his fond arm; not one kiss from his warm lips for me. My soul yearns for him, pleads for his coming. He has not deserted me. His love is purer than the mountain air, sweeter than the cadences of music, and his words freighted with the Christian's earnestness and sanctity. He will come to me soon. A horror crosses my soul. It will not settle there; but spreads its dusky wings in the morning of hope. The Eternal could not reward such love and constancy as mine by the cruel edict, *death!* No, no; he is too beautiful to die. The flowers would fold their petals and weep, he loved them so well. The snow-vessels of the sky would mourn in everlasting black the closing of those radiant eyes which revelled in their fleecy voyages; and all the peals of joyous music would die away in dirges when his ringing laugh was hushed in death. By these tokens I know he lives: The birds swing upon the branches, singing merrily; dear music rises and falls in exquisite cadences; the stars look kindly upon me; all the heavens move in harmony, and hope sings to me like a bird from my Father's Paradise. Oh! he lives, he lives! Father in heaven, send him quickly. Jesus, Lamb of God, who hast known the horrors of loneliness and desolation, send him to me, for my soul yearns for his coming! I have never turned my back on thee. I have clung to thy cross, and striven to honor thee before men. Do not thou desert me in my agony. Send him to me, dear Lord, for I am thy child forever!"

She hushed her raving as a solemn sound on the

air. The clock chimed midnight. Every stroke trembled in prolonged distinctness upon the ear of the deserted watcher. "Another day has passed, and still he comes not." She bowed her head upon her hands and sobbed aloud. Then, as the memory of the divine invitation recurred to her, she opened her book of evening prayer, and, kneeling by the window, prayed earnestly in the moonlight. She was interrupted by something thrown suddenly against the glass beside her. She started up and looked out into the street. The moonbeams lighted the walks with the clearness of day, and she saw at once a man standing on the opposite pavement, and evidently making signs to her. What could it mean at that late hour? Who was it? She shrank back from the window, but still remained near enough to watch the stranger's movements. He raised something above his head, and then offered it to her. It was a dark-looking object, small, but still visible. He passed it into his other hand and held it out to her again. She feared he might be intoxicated. Her modesty induced her to withdraw entirely from the window. After a few moments she looked again, and found him still there. He raised the object and offered it to her again. She raised the sash, and said, peremptorily, "Go away, or I shall call for the watch."

"Lady," replied a gentlemanly tone, "I suspect this book belongs to you. If I am right, you may claim it. I will leave it in the door. But, wait a moment, here comes a watchman. I will entrust it to him. He shall bring it to you. If it is yours, claim it, and take it in the house. If not, be kind enough to return it to me by the watchman, that I may find the owner."

There was something suspicious in this procedure. There might be complicity to gain admittance to the house for burglary. She hesitated a moment; but, as the well-known features and form of the night-watch came up in the moonlight, she said, "Very well. There comes a policeman whom I know; give the book to him."

She saw the night-watch receive the book; and then, lighting her lamp, proceeded downstairs to open the front door. The house was silent; the inmates asleep. The officer was standing before the door when she opened it. "This book," he said, "was found under a pillow in St. Luke's Hospital. It is supposed to belong to you. Claim it, if it is yours."

She recognized it at once. It was indeed her own.

am very thankful to you," she said. "It is mine, and was unaccountably lost."

"You are certain you are the owner?" inquired the officer.

"Indeed, I am," was the response. "My name is not here; but it is mine, as I can establish whenever it is necessary."

"That is all right," was the response. "You will be put to no trouble to prove the ownership. Good-night, miss."

She closed the door, went up to her room, and opened the book. She looked at the name which was written there, and then looked out the window. The stranger was conversing, apparently, with the watchman. He soon turned away and disappeared; and the watchman continued on down his beat. How marvellous that the book had found its way back to her! How could any stranger know or suspect that it belonged to her? She puzzled over the matter in vain. Who would take the trouble to hunt her up at midnight in a great city to return such a trifle? The insignificance of the book made all this trouble and concern to ascertain the owner very remarkable. She concluded to regard it, at length, as an omen of better fortunes for her in the future. Perhaps God would indicate by trifles at first his regard for her. Her gratitude for this might ensure greater happiness hereafter in this life. She returned thanks to Heaven for this token, and then retired to her bed. The labor of the morrow was not far remote. The employee of the book-bindery must sleep. She was soon dreaming of that face that, waking or sleeping, haunted her.

The stranger who had returned the book continued on his way, and engaged in mental study. "I told them so. I knew that man was truthful. His face is good as a bond. He knows nothing of this person. *She* is the one who knows most of him. No one on earth could have left that book but the lady visitor. I told them so. Now they will see that I am no fool. But the next link. Ah! the next link. Will she tell what she knows? What has she to conceal? There's the difficulty. She looks like a lady, acts like a truly pious person, keeps respectable company. She little knows how well her movements are watched. I hope she has had nothing to do with this business. Indeed I do."

And thus Fagan meditated on his way. He was going to head-quarters to report.

Chapter XXXII.

This is a creature,
Would she begin a sect, might quench the zeal
Of all professors else; make proselytes
Of who she but bid follow.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

THE wind went howling on its cheerless way, tossing and whirling capriciously the falling snow-flakes. The storm waxed in intensity, hurrying pedestrians along the whitening pavements, and crowding the platforms of the avenue cars with shivering passengers, anxious to gain the shelter and blazing fires of home. The lamps upon the corner posts of the streets gleamed hazy and faint amid the masses of drifting, whirling, gliding snow. The shop windows were growing misty, the tramp of feet on the sidewalks gave forth a muffled sound, while at intervals the rush of the wind hurled against the window-glass the fine snow-flakes with a gentle, tinkling patter, reminding the insiders of their comfortable shelter and the gloom outside. As the gale freshened and gathered power, the window-shutters creaked and swung backward with a crash against the buildings, the air rushed in under the doors of the poor and added new draft to the stove fires, and the miniature snow-banks on the window-sills rose higher and higher against the glass till a contrary blast swept off their tops again and whirled them on to the accumulating masses in the street. The night police paced sullenly along their beats, snow-crowned and shivering; and the tinkle of the car-bells sounded faintly in the gathering gloom and howl of the storm.

One room was cosey and comfortable with its snow-bound windows and its coal fire. The soft light of a lamp illumined it and softened the features of a student earnest in the study of his book. About him were school-desks, all deserted save one, where a young girl still lingered engaged in writing out one of her Spanish exercises. She would have made at that moment an admirable study for an artist who would delineate a nun graceful, and poring over the record of a holy life, — an Anglo-Saxon Editha. The disfigured portions of her forehead and cheeks were bound by

white cloths concealing utterly her misfortune, and the dark veil covering her head fell gracefully upon her neck and shoulders. It was an admirable method of concealing a disaster and making the most of it. Her clinched left hand supported her cheek, and her eyes ran rapidly to and from her book to her copy, and then followed the nervous and rapid undulations of her pen. She was utterly absorbed in her task, and her eyes were never raised, else she would have detected occasional glances stolen at her by the teacher, whose absorption in his book might have been more intense. Occasionally he corrected himself mentally for the aberration of his thoughts, and returned with renewed vigor to the perusal of his classical authority. At length her task was completed and she brought it to the teacher for examination. He laid aside his book and compared her writing with the English text he had given her to translate. She stood beside him with the fingers of her right hand daintily resting upon the edge of his desk and studying his face while he examined her work. Her eyes recognized his beauty, as they had done many a night before, and an expression of deep interest, or sympathy, flitted across them as she contemplated him. He looked up at length and her eyelashes drooped.

"You are making rapid progress," he said, pleasantly, "and, if you are attentive and careful always as you have been to-night, you will soon master this language. I know that you will enjoy Spanish literature when its treasures are fairly opened to you. There is one word in your translation which is worthy of mention. Here it is "azulejos." In Arabic it is az-zulaj. They are nothing more nor less than the Dutch tiles of which you have no doubt heard much. They were introduced into Spain by the Moors and from there carried to Holland. They were sapphire and blue. Some writers regard them as the same pavement mentioned in the book of Exodus, and likely to have been known to the Hebrews. But hear the wind! It is a fearful night for you to be out alone. Shall I not accompany you to the street-car? You will be blown away."

"No, I thank you I am substantial enough to face a little wind, and it is but a step. But it appears to me that you are growing thinner. Are you not overtasked by your two schools and by your writing? You seem to be always occupied. You never rest, I fear."

"Earth is not a place of rest; that is the Elysium of the saints, perfect rest."

He said this with an air of sadness; then, recovering instantly, as if he had betrayed too much of his inner life to the girl, he continued with a laugh: "But I am becoming such an inveterate student that I am really unhappy when I am not at work. We never know our own capacity for application until it is tested. But while I think of it I want to show you my new student's lamp, which I shall use late at night when I court an extraordinary inspiration. It is a gift from a lady whose son I am preparing for college."

"That will indeed be charming; do let me see it. I am sure it must be a gem, since it is a present; something rare no doubt. Are you bound to preserve the lady's name a secret?"

"Not at all; Mrs. Gillmore, of Twentieth Street, an accomplished woman, who fancies I give greater impetus to her son's education than any tutor he has had. But let me get it for you."

He passed across the room to a large closet where his bedding was heaped up during school-hours. The floor of the school-room was his bedstead. He produced a large glass lamp, fashioned in the shape of an owl, and standing upon silver feet. The wick issued from the top of the head, and the eyes were polished jet. It was made of ground glass, and upon it was traced the ancient Greek salutation at the production of the evening lamp, "*Χαιρε φιλων φως.*" The back of the lamp bore the Latin synonyma, "*Salve amica lux.*" It was a strange conceit, and both pupil and teacher laughed as they examined its details. "Is not the owl a symbol of night and solitary meditation?" inquired the pupil. "I think I have seen it so styled."

"It is," was the response; "and is frequently found among the hieroglyphical inscriptions of Egypt."

"Are you familiar with that people, with the history, I mean, of the Egyptians?" she inquired.

"Not very," he replied. "I have always been interested in the explorations made in that venerable country. But their history is meagre, fragmentary, gleaned principally from the inscriptions on monumental tombs, temples, etc. I refer, of course, to their ancient history. My own impressions are, that they may have attained great culture in the arts and sciences at an earlier period than is generally sup-

posed. There is no reason to pronounce them ignorant or barbarians before the accounts we have of them in the Scriptures. It is evident that before men were divided by different customs and languages, long before the days of Abraham, they had made great progress in the arts. The brick tower of Babel, and the city constructed by them, while they still possessed a common language, and the apprehension God expressed that there would be no limit to which their united labors and skill would not attain, — all attest the progress of art and knowledge, long before the earliest records we have of the Egyptians. And far away behind the times of Babel, the Scriptures inform us of the wonderful progress of knowledge and art. Before the deluge even, the manufacture of brass and iron was known; also the harp and the organ. When Noah entered the ark, he was six hundred years old in the knowledge of his times, and when he left the ark he lived three hundred and fifty years longer to transmit his knowledge to the people who afterwards built the city and tower of Babel. It appears to me gratuitous to pronounce the times of Joseph the commencement of knowledge, and the cradle of the arts, or to assert that they did not exist in Egypt long before his times."

"How interesting all these matters must be to those who have the time or the books to refer to!"

"Ah, yes; the passion of research grows upon one unconsciously. Had I the means I would surround myself with the most perfect library of learned and useful books in the world."

At the thought his eye beamed with the glory of ambition and acquisition. He turned to his companion, who was regarding him with intense interest. The excitement of intellect and enthusiasm is contagious. She spoke with something of his own spirit in reply: —

"I think I can comprehend your feeling; my life must be passed in imparting to others only the gleanings of learning which I can gather in humble life. But I am sure I know what it is to aspire to greater attainments. You are a man, and may in time win the money for literary culture. I trust you may. But it would afford me great pleasure if you would indicate to me the line of reading I should pursue to gain all the information possible in my humble sphere of

action. I do not know what to read; the public libraries of this city are so vast that I need a director."

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to suggest readings to you. I will speak to you on this subject, briefly of course, every time you come to me to recite."

"You are very kind, sir."

"Not at all; it will be a pleasure, and will suggest also to my own mind matters which I should remember. But, since you have introduced this subject, let me inform you of a matter in which I am interested. Perhaps if you take up a course of ancient readings, you can assist me occasionally, and thus we shall be jointly benefited. I have a curious relic of antiquity. My mother gave it to me, and certain circumstances have combined to arouse my curiosity regarding it. A Greek artist painted my mother's likeness on one side of what appears to be an ancient Greek weight. It may have been used as our own brass and iron weights are. On the reverse are strange and unintelligible inscriptions. I would like to devote an hour each evening to the difficult task of deciphering these hieroglyphics. Now, if you will take up the history of Greece, and after your Spanish recitation every evening give me an abstract of what you have read, verbally I mean, you may help my research, for I am going to attack Greece first. You will certainly be benefited, and I will thus have more leisure for investigation in other departments. Will your time allow of this?"

The response was eager and rapid.

"I will make time in some way for this. I know it will benefit me."

"That will be very pleasant for us. Now let me show the weight to you."

He proceeded to the closet again, and, taking from a box which contained the sum total of his earthly effects the mysterious gift of the Greek, he returned to her side and desired her to be seated. They drew chairs up to the desk, and the brass relic was placed in her hands for a preliminary examination. He drew the lamp nearer to his pupil and sat regarding her earnestly while she inspected the likeness.

"It is beautiful enough for an angel," she exclaimed, after a minute inspection of the picture. "Any one might know you were her son. You have the same eyes, mouth, and sometimes the same expression. Is she living?"

"Alas! no. The brightness of life faded when she died."

The girl glanced up at the proud, beautiful, noble face of the speaker. What true woman does not respect a man for the avowal of that tenderness which is at once the weakness and glory of his manhood? Blended power and gentleness are the token of a well-balanced heritage of ancestral blood. The Teacher of Galilee inherited the power of the Godhead and the gentleness of Mary's human heart. Thus could he appreciate human weakness and pardon it.

The scholar sat very near to him, and he fancied once or twice that she manifested that gentle tremor or excitement which sympathy and magnetism occasion between those who are congenial and sit almost in contact. This physical attraction or consciousness in time may ripen into love. He regarded her with interest and pity, nothing more. It seemed so hard that the charm of her natural grace and intelligence should be marred by the consciousness of disfiguration. But he soon forgot this drawback again in the gentle tones of her voice and the ease of her manner. A soft, dreamy glamour appeared to envelop her every movement and action. Her language flowed without effort, and only when some unusual excitement aroused her did she manifest that dilation of the pupil of the eye which indicates the slumbering powers of the woman. Her attractiveness had grown upon him. The presence of the other female scholars in the evening school had overshadowed her to a certain extent. She appeared more retiring and quiet in her nature than the rest. She spoke pleasantly to all, but studiously avoided familiarity, and devoted her undivided attention to her Spanish. Sometimes she was the first to recite and leave the school-room. She never before had been the last. She appeared more natural and unrestrained upon this stormy evening than he had ever seen her. The future governess was winning his favor without effort. Unlike the young teachers who were qualifying themselves for future and more extended usefulness, she never sought to engross his attention by irrelevant conversation. The others might be pardoned for wishing to linger beside that beautiful face and those fascinating tones, but she always appeared satisfied with that contact which secured her recitations and released her from the school-room. But [illegible] relict on this evening regarding her duty. Eve[illegible] peared to have

been confused in her manuscript, and with a slight laugh of annoyance she requested permission to withdraw to her desk and rewrite the entire exercise. The others had withdrawn, and thus she was left alone with the teacher. The result was a compact for mutual study and improvement in Grecian literature. It is always dangerous for two beautiful and gifted representatives of the sexes to be brought intimately and alone together, no matter what may be the ostensible necessity for such communion. One or the other is likely to suffer. Cupid steals as remorselessly in through the studious silence of the academy as he does through the music-haunted halls of frivolity. But now it appeared the crafty little god was to have it all his own way. No strange eyes were to restrain intercourse. No damaging tongues were to have play. The teacher and pupil were to sit in peril one mortal hour each evening in mutual edification and mental improvement. Two pair of beautiful eyes were mutually to instruct each other in the lore of buried nations. The toss of a penny as to which shall turn up, hearts or brains!

"You have indeed been unfortunate in such a loss," she said, seriously. No human power can fathom what substitute was silently suggested to that girl's mind for this affliction. She only looked at the reverse side of the brass weight, and seemed at once to become profoundly interested in the hieroglyphics upon it.

"What is all this grouping of men and tents on the right?" she said; "and here on the left is something that resembles an elephant fenced in. He seems on the point of devouring little ducks with their heads turned around over their backs. How curious!"

The teacher smiled, and producing a magnifying glass from his vest-pocket said:—

"Examine the ducks with this glass, and I think you will agree with me that they are little lamps of the antique pattern, such as are found at Pompeii, with curved handles at one end and the flame streaming out at the other. The Egyptian lamps of that pattern have been preserved."

"Why, they certainly *are* little lamps. This glass brings them out distinctly. They seem to be standing around a dark hole. There must be something in that pit worth seeing."

"That was precisely my own conjecture when I examined

them with the glass The suggestion is likely to be the correct one, since we both agree upon it at once. What do you say about this figure a little above the lamps, and this one a little below? You will require the glass again."

"Why, this one is a crocodile or lizard, and the other one higher up looks like a cow. I can certainly see the horns. What do you call them, Mr. Earle?"

"In the absence of any clue to the country where this brass was cast, I pronounce them to be the sacred bull and crocodile of Egypt. I cannot define what you call the elephant. It is too out of proportion with the bull, too huge beside the bull, to be an elephant. It must be intended for some larger animal. Behind this huge creature, what you call a fence seems to me to be a forest, only the trees have no branches; everything runs straight up and down. Behind this forest there is a space which seems to be full of little holes, with spiral lines running to or from them. It looks like water running into holes, or running away from them."

"Perhaps they are springs, Mr. Earle. See! the line curves and winds away from them."

"We shall have to call them springs until we gain further light. Now what do you call this wavy line behind the springs?" He pointed it out to her with the point of his pen.

"That looks like a serpent," she said.

"I do not think so, for this reason. The line is too long and out of proportion for that. Your serpent would be longer than your elephant, your bull and your crocodile, and my forest put together. I think it is intended for a chain of mountains."

"That may be, Mr. Earle. But what is this behind your mountains? This line is four times, five times, yes, ten times longer than your chain of mountains. It is an irregular line; but it just divides your brass weight through the middle. Those men and tents are away off in the extreme part of the other half. They do not appear to have any connection with this side of the weight. See!"

"Yes, I see. But examine carefully with the glass again, and tell me what they are doing with their hands."

"Why, the two beside the tents are pointing across the open space towards your mountains, or perhaps towards the huge animal which looks towards the lamps. Yes; and so is the man who stands alone without any tent. He is point

ing the same way with one hand; but with the other he points down to his own feet. Something appears to be written at his feet. I cannot make it out."

"I *have* made it out," was the response. "It is Greek, '*Σοφία*,' signifying wisdom, eminent skill, or profound knowledge. That is surely the meaning of the word. How it is connected with all this grouping is more than I can conceive, unless it is susceptible of this construction. Profound knowledge, *there*, that is where he is pointing downward will lead men *there;* that is where he is pointing in common with the two men standing apart. Now these two men whom you imagine are standing beside tents, I think are standing beside the pyramids of Egypt. They are too high for tents, so much higher than the men as to be absurd. Just look at them."

"How quick you are! You must have a good eye for perspective. If this brass is very ancient, they may be the pyramids. You have enlisted my curiosity. Where was this thing found?"

"In the island of Salamis. That is all we have to start with. Your readings in Grecian history may suggest some connection between Salamis and Egypt; for I cannot divest my mind of the idea that those tall, tent-like objects symbolize Egypt. I am tolerably well-informed in Grecian literature; but thousands of insignificant facts will, of course, escape the memory, and your fresher reading may recall to me a simple fact which will be the perfect clue. I think this solitary man is standing upon the island of Salamis, where the brass was discovered. He is pointing to a Greek word. Hence I infer that he may be a Greek. If this hypothesis is correct, then I deduce this conclusion from my premises. A Greek points to some object of interest, the knowledge of which is held in common with two Egyptians who point the same way. The premises may all be wrong, and then our investigations will fall to the ground. But you will store your mind with historical facts, and I shall have to open another line of investigation. But allow me to say here, this island of Salamis is a glorious memory, a golden page in the annals of Greece. The poet Æschylus was in the battle there, and in his drama of 'The Persians' he has erected a monument of glory that will never crumble. Fancy for one moment that dramatic spectacle. On a slope of Mount Ægaleos sat Xerxes on a throne of gold, with all

ver feet. The ...ces and potentates from Babylon, Ecbatana, and Susa surrounded him, all gazing down over the battle. They had reporters in those days with pens and tablets grouped about the monarch, recording the swaying fortunes of the combatants, and marking down the Persian generals who distinguished themselves, that they might receive promotion. Here the mighty conqueror looked down upon the island and gulf of Salamis. On the side of the gulf nearest to his position was drawn up in three lines, the immense fleet of the Persians. The entire navy of the East was at his feet. Opposite to them, and clinging to the coast of Salamis, was the little navy of Athens, Sparta, and Ægina, their combined shipping amounting to only one-third of the Persian fleet. But Themistocles commanded the Greeks. Suddenly up the sides of the mountain swept the war-song of the Greeks. It reached the monarch's ear over the waters. They were singing of their wives, their children, and their beleaguered country. I never recall that song without emotion. Onward they came, their oars beating time to the inspiring song, and like maddened eagles their vessels swept into the fearful Persian array, and scattered them to the four winds of heaven. The wrecks of their vessels covered the waters of the gulf, and the army Xerxes had drawn up on the island of Psyttalea to prevent the escape of the Greeks was scattered before his eyes. He rent his garments and rushed wildly from his golden throne, which was captured and placed in the Acropolis at Athens. This recollection will fix in your mind the island of Salamis, and something may arise in connection with this name to identify the solitary figure that stands here on the brass, so mysteriously pointing in two directions."

The scholar had regarded the speaker closely, noting every gleam of his excited eye, and every graceful gesture of his raised arm, partaking of his enthusiasm, and captivated by his manner. She promised then to aid him when her duties would permit, and with a gracious smile bade him good-evening, and turned to descend into the street and the storm. She covered her conventual head-dress with a dark hood, threw on her cloak, and passed away down into the snow-laden wind. She allowed the teacher to accompany her only to the street door, and then left, struggling up against the storm, and making for a street car. Constant Earle retraced his steps to his school-room, and prepared for

the long and lamp-lit labors of the night. It was nearly daylight when he abandoned his manuscripts for sleep.

Chapter XXXV.

Novelty is what we recover from oblivion. We can fish little out of the river Lethe that has not first been thrown into it.

PAUL CHATFIELD.

THERE is a country which is the garden spot of a continent. It is protected from the winds of the ocean by ranges of mountains on the east. Its soil nourishes the roots of giant trees, beneath whose branches another and stranger forest shoots upwards in slender beauty but impassable density, — a forest of cane. Across this country of luxuriant growth and wonderful fertility flow its veins, imparting vitality to its body, and moving in deep, rocky channels with perpendicular banks. There are entire regions of its undulating surface where the natural growth of the grass is as fine and beautiful as the lawn of an English estate. Other tracts are covered with wild clover and buffalo grass, affording admirable pasture, and the wild flowers give to the landscape an extraordinary beauty. The sugar-tree in its forests attains a wonderful height, and wild grape-vines curl and cling to the trunk, rising like huge serpents from the earth fifty or seventy feet perpendicularly in the air before they attempt to coil their mighty folds about the doomed monarch, who after years of struggle dies. These marvellous vines attain the summit of the tree, and spread over the tops a denser covering of their own leaves, and thus the monarch slowly yields up his life excluded from the sun. The honey locust, with its thorny spikes and long, sweet-flavored pods, the paw-paw, and the coffee-tree mingle in the forests. The country is rolling and there are no absolute plains. Monotony is a word unknown. There are hills and vales rounded with a surface of the richest soil, mountains bold and beautiful, and woods destitute of undergrowth, where the richest pasturage is found. This is a true picture of to-day. At the present hour these peculiarities are palpable, though cities and towns and vil

lages lie thick upon its surface, though the iron horse howls through the land at his fearful speed and the steamer parts gracefully the river waters. One hundred years of civilization and culture have made this natural garden the paradise of a great empire. With all the improvements made in its adjoining and remote sister provinces it is still *the garden*, and, unless up heaved by volcanic action or fractured by earthquakes, will ever remain so.

This luxuriant surface, this variegated land, is the Arabia of the New World, in the development of the beauty and speed of its horses. They leave its boundaries with "empire" marked upon their foreheads, and the nation bows to the assumption.

This land is a battle-ground. Thousands of gallant foemen are sleeping now under freshly cut turf. The nation shivers at the memory of its recent agony. Often within the last one hundred years has it been a battle-ground. Arrows and bullets cleaved its air so thickly and so frequently that the name was given to it: "The dark and bloody ground." There was a day when this land was unknown to Europeans. Then red men shot and tomahawked and scalped each other and won renown in battle. Far behind the Indian race a nation of men, taller as their bones testify, powerful and skilled in the arts of war, erected fortifications and carried on scientific slaughter. It is with lost nationalities this chapter has to do. How long this ancient people held possession of the country, from what nursery of nations they came, whether they voluntarily abandoned the land or were exterminated, are questions not determinable upon the present meagre data. They have left fortifications and cemeteries, which a careful comparison of facts in natural history will justify the savant in pronouncing more than *eight hundred years old*. Some of the fortifications were constructed of solid masonry. Rocky fortresses are likely to defy speculation as to their antiquity, without hieroglyphics upon them to indicate the period of their construction. These fortifications manifest great progress in the art of military defence. Lofty sites, flanked by the tortuous sinuosities of rivers, ditches scientifically constructed, earthenware vessels, queen's-ware dishes, copper bracelets, and copper tools for working in wood and stone found in connection with the fortresses and ditches, suggest a degree of civilization which persons of culture will never associate with the

rudeness and wildness of the North American Indian Several of there admirably constructed works enclose ten acres of ground, and upon the earth, which in places has accumulated over the walls, huge trees have grown whose circles indicate great antiquity. The indication of age, however, by the circles of trees, is deemed fallible, and the true antiquity or unknown character of the builders is arrived at or approximated to, by the intrinsic science and civilization displayed in the construction of the rock forts and the progress made in working copper mines, and manufacturing copper tools and ornaments and queen's-ware dishes. Lines of fortifications crowning elevated cliffs indicate a knowledge of telegraphing by signals or by beacon fires the approach of foreign invaders.

The excavation of the large tumuli in the immediate neighborhood of some of these fortifications may some day develop further evidences of the civilization of this lost people. These evidences of civilization are frequent in North America, but upon the summits of the cliffs and deep in the dry caves of this fruitful land, which has been already styled the Arabia of the New World, they utter most forcibly their protest to be respected as the monuments of an advanced people far superior to the American savages. One cliff two hundred feet in height, flanked on three sides by a stream, is crowned by the rock wall of a great fortress, which must have been impregnable without artillery. Here was excavated an image of a large bird, carved from stone, with several holes *drilled* through it, and a great quantity of sea-shells. This fortress is distant from the ocean four hundred and forty miles, and from a navigable river about eighty miles. In several dry caves have been excavated human bones of extraordinary size, some of the skulls encasing easily the skull of a modern citizen of the country. The excavation of ancient crockery at these fortifications is common. One mound, which had attracted attention for many years, has recently been levelled, and many relics were brought to light: one copper and two white queen's-ware breastplates, copper beads, ivory beads, and bracelets of copper. Thirty years before the razing of this mound the trees grew as large upon the summit as those in the adjacent forest. The fortifications generally crown almost inaccessible bluffs, are numerous, and usually include from six to ten acres of the ground. They are included in a tract of

country three hundred and seventy miles long, with an average width of one hundred and ten miles. Outside of this tract, for hundreds of miles in every direction, are similar works of masonry or earth spread over the continent. Attention is diverted from this tract of "the dark and bloody ground" for an instant, for the purpose of refuting any supposition that the copper tools, ornaments, or breastplates were derived from any remote importation from another continent, and to demonstrate the utter improbability that the American Indians worked copper mines. No student will deny that the products of mines have contributed to the advancement of the human family, and that the working of mines is palpable evidence of civilization. The earliest records extant of the condition of the North American savage indicate expressly the amount of his mining skill in the item of copper. Where that valuable article lay in his path, excavated by the hand of nature, he knew not how to turn it to account. The Jesuit missionaries and the French voyageurs are the earliest authorities. The missionary Claude Alloüez left Three Rivers in Canada on the 8th of August, 1666, with four hundred Indians. He reached Lake Superior in September, and writes: "It happens frequently that pieces of copper are found, weighing from ten to twenty pounds. I have seen several such pieces in the hands of savages, and since they are very superstitious they esteem them as divinities, or as presents given to them to promote their happiness by the gods who dwell beneath the water. For this reason they preserve these pieces of copper wrapped up with their most precious articles. In some families they have been kept for more than fifty years; in others they have descended from time out of mind, being cherished as domestic gods." Father Dablon says, in his "Relation" for 1669: "In cooking their meals, as is usual among the savages, by heating stones and casting them into a birch-bark pail containing water, they found that they were almost all copper" (the stones found on an island in the lake). He relates their being poisoned in consequence, and refusing ever after to visit the copper island, where the copper gods had manifested their displeasure at the profane use made of copper boulders in heating the water to cook their meats. That race of people would hardly have engaged in the wonderful copper mining of Lake Superior, frequent evidences of which are discovered by the present American miners in that

region. The intelligent agent of the Minnesota Company, in 1847–48, discovered upon their lands, in a longitudinal cavern into which he crept, evidences of ancient mining He procured assistance, and subsequently explored the cavern. He found many stone hammers. Subsequently, upon excavating to the depth of eighteen feet through clay and decayed vegetation, he discovered a mass of copper ten feet long, three feet wide, and two feet thick, weighing more than six tons. He excavated about it, and discovered that it had been raised five feet out of its native bed. It rested on billets of oak, supported by oaken sleepers. Long exposure to moisture had blackened the oak and rendered it soft like peat-bog. The earth which had fallen under supported the mass of copper. The ancient miners had squared it so that the exposed surfaces were smooth. Under it was found the vein from which it had been taken. The rubbish from the mine is heaped up in mounds. The north-western mounds are frequently razed, exposing copper knives, chisels, and stone hammers of immense weight, in the immediate vicinity of and in the mining excavations themselves. A few rods to the west of the huge block of copper that weighed six tons the ancient miners left a portion of the veinstone in the form of a pillar, to support the hanging wall. These evidences of careful mining are observed for two miles at this locality. Upon one of the mounds of rubbish a hemlock had grown, which exhibited three hundred and ninety-five annual rings. This carried the nearest date of that mining operation back to a day before Columbus started for America. In one mine was found a copper gad and chisel, and a timber marked by an axe two inches wide. The mining hammers were of greenstone. One weighed thirty-nine pounds. Ten cart-loads of them were gathered in one vicinity. Charcoal was found in the rock excavations, indicating the employment of fire in separating the copper from the rock. In the Hartz and at Altenberg in Europe, fire is still employed in mining. Humboldt states that nine hundred miles west of Montreal, in 1746, M. de Verandrier discovered enormous masses of rock elevated by men, on which he found a tablet inserted in a pillar of cut stone, which bore an inscription supposed to be Tartar. Jesuits in Quebec informed Kahn that they had seen it. It was sent to Count Maurepas in France, and is lost or laid aside neglected. It may have been a record of the stone fortress builders of Kentucky or

the copper miners before Columbus, who supplied their defenders with copper breastplates and copper tools.

The Icelandic historians may be correct in their statement that a colony was planted on the southerly coast of North America, at Whiteman's land, or Irland it Mikla, Greater Ireland, which existed as late as the year 1000. They state that a pagan Icelander was driven there in 983, and was baptized in that colony. They are also authority for the statement that Eric was a missionary in Vinland (probably near Newport); that he returned to Iceland in 1120, sailed to Europe, and by the Scandinavian bishops was consecrated at Lund in Denmark, by Archbishop Adzer, in 1121, and sent back to found an American See. He returned to Vinland with a body of clergy and colonists. They state, also, that John, a missionary, sailed from Iceland to Vinland, and was slain by the heathen. The Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians, in their memoirs, state: "The ancient *tholus* in Newport, the erection of which appears to be coeval with the time of Bishop Eric, belonged to a Scandinavian church, or monastery, where, in alternation with Latin masses, the old Danish tongue was heard seven hundred years ago."

The speculations of the learned Forster, in his "Northern Voyages," may also be allowed to drop their mantle of fable. The tribe which exists in the interior of Newfoundland, so different from the American savages and the eternal enemies of the Esquimaux, may be the descendants of the ancient Normans. The Saga of Snorro, of 1215, may be true. The Veteris Grœlandiæ Descriptio, Hafnia, 1706; and Historia Winlandiæ Antiquæ, Hafnia, 1705, transmitted to us by Torfæus, may be American history. The extracts from Hackluyt regarding the statements of Antonio Zeno, the Venetian, derived from the fisherman shipwrecked on the American coast, may finally be exalted to the dignity of history. "The inhabitants were intelligent and acquainted with the mechanical arts of Europe. They cultivated grain, made beer, and lived in houses built of stone. There were Latin books in the king's library, though the inhabitants had no knowledge of that language. They were taken by the inhabitants and carried to a fair and populous city; a man was found who had likewise been cast away upon the coast and who spoke Latin. They had many cities and *castles*, and carried on a trade with Greenland for pitch, sulphur, and

peltry. Though much given to navigation, they were ignorant of the use of the compass, and finding the Friselanders acquainted with it, held them in great esteem, and the king sent them with twelve barks to visit a country to the south, called Drogeo. They found the people to be cannibals in Drogeo. The fisherman described this Drogeo as being a country of vast extent, or, rather, a new world; that the inhabitants were naked and barbarous; but that far to the south-west there was a more civilized region, and temperate climate, where the inhabitants had a knowledge of gold and silver, lived in cities, erected splendid temples to idols, and sacrificed human victims to them, which they afterwards devoured." M. Malte-Brun surmises the civilized people to the south-west, who sacrificed human victims in rich temples, to have been the Mexicans, or some ancient nation of Florida, *or Louisiana.* Forster resents the attempts to condemn these statements as fabulous, " as original acts in the archives of Venice prove that the chevalier undertook a voyage to the North; that his brother Antonio followed him; that Antonio traced a map which he brought back, and hung up in his house, where it remained subject to public examination until the time of Marcolini," by whom the statements were given to the world.

The rapidly accumulating evidence points to the ancient settlement of America at three different points. People from the North of Europe, by way of Greenland, settled in the north-eastern portion. Central America, by her splendid monuments, indicates a far more ancient settlement from India or Africa. The splendor of her temples in ruins at Palenqua and its immediate neighborhood, upon which are distinctly visible sacred emblems of Egypt and India, the far more elegant stone sculpture on the outer walls of the palace or temple in the mountains which border the west side of Yucatan, the several pyramids larger than that of Teotihuacan, all more learned in their execution and remarkable in their type than Palenqua, described by Stevens, — all justify the speculations of Humboldt, Clarigero, and Bullock, that Mexico, centuries before the Spanish invasion in 1520, was populous, wealthy, industrious, and remarkably civilized. At the Spanish invasion Mexico was a large and populous city; the palace and court of Montezuma was splendid; the public buildings were vast and ornamental. It boasted highways, bridges, public baths, and pyramids

for worship high in air. Bullock saw an ancient plan of the city, proving that it was far more extensive than at present. When the Spaniards first came in contact with the Mexicans they found them possessed of a calendar more accurate than that of the Greeks and Romans. Their hieroglyphics were little inferior to those of Egypt. The traditions of the Mexicans declared that their country was first settled by tribes from the North, several centuries before the Spanish conquest, as early as 640. The tradition of the Choctaws, according to the authority of Henry Vose of Mississippi, gave their migration from Asia, by the Straits of Behring, 3286 years ago. They mentioned a remarkably long night, which must have occurred at the Straits of Behring, at the time of the long day of Joshua in Judea. Herodotus relates that the record of such an event was extant in Egypt when he visited that country, corresponding in time with the scriptural statement. The Chinese note a similar phenomenon at the same time. The Asiatic origin of the Indians receives confirmation from daily developing proofs in the comparison of their traditions, ceremonies, language, and superstitions. Catlin, the Indian painter, and his companion, witnessed a religious ceremony of the Mandans. The tradition was that a stranger came to them from the West, who had escaped a great flood in his canoe by landing on the summit of a lofty mountain. The season of the ceremony is the budding of the willow. The reason they assign is, that the *bird* flew back with a sprig of willow. On further questioning, they stated the bird was a mourning dove. Another Indian tradition is connected with the "enchanted mountain," linked with the Blue Ridge mountains of Georgia. Dr. Stevenson, of Dahlonega, states that on the upper rocks of this mountain are one hundred and thirty six impressions of human feet, and the feet of animals. The human feet are from four inches to seventeen inches and a half in length. The largest human foot has six toes. A fine, delicate hand is traced deeply in the rock. Horse-tracks are plainly visible, and the tracks of many turkeys, turtles, terrapins, bears, a snake, and two deer. (Human footprints in the rocks of Kentucky and Missouri are distinctly visible, and perfect copies have been taken by savans.) An Indian tradition says of the "enchanted mountain," that "the world was once deluged by water, and man and all beings were destroyed except one family, together with various

animals necessary to replenish the earth; that the great canoe once rested on this spot, and here the whole troop disembarked, leaving the impression on the rocks, softened by the long submersion." Stevenson states that he visited these rocks, and cut out an impression of one human foot. The rock was an imperfect species of soapstone, and he believed the impressions to be a production of art. Schoolcraft took accurate copies of the rock-prints in Missouri. Twelve miles from Cumming, Georgia, are large ancient mounds, or tumuli, and in the vicinity is an unhewn mass of granite, eight and a half feet long, two and a half feet wide, and three-sided, with irregular, converging points. Numerous characters are inscribed upon it, — seventeen of them varying in shape. The largest circles are eight inches in diameter. The designs are very regular, very ancient in appearance, and are ascribed to the same ancient race who constructed the immense sacrificial mounds in the State. The traditions of the Mexicans uniformly pointed to the North as the home of their ancestry at a great distance, and in a very remote period. On the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Ohio, are numerous indications of a vast population in ages long past. The mounds of New York have disclosed similar crockery, tools, and ornaments to the tumuli of the Southern and Western States. Thus far, examination and learning point to the Tartar race for the origin of these lost nationalities spreading from the Gulf of Mexico to the North Pole.

But when the elegance of the monuments below the Gulf of Mexico receives careful attention, the glimmering light of an immense antiquity startles, and the assertions of incredulity are hushed in the wonderful resemblances manifested upon the immemorial temples and pyramids to the ancient mysteries and symbols of Egypt, and that common source of all the arts, India. Surrounded by the great waste of waters, stand these wonderful tokens of art and culture, suggesting a people familiar with navigation, and realizing in their glory the strange and mystic traditions of the classical ages. Here, manifestly, was the seat of that ancient power which terrified the East, and was hurled backward, baffled by Pelasgic arms and valor. Here was that wonderful confederacy of ten associated kingdoms, whose harmony and splendor the ancients loved so well to portray. Here were the wide-spread forests, the luxuriant pastures, the rich mines of precious metals, and the min

eral springs bursting from the earth at the beneficent touch of the deities. The spacious harbors sheltered the richly laden barques of every clime, and the arsenals held every equipment for successful navigation and maritime warfare. Like glorious Rome this power culminated, and in her decline was hurried to ruin by the storm of northern barbarians, who severed her provinces and swept down upon her centre like the scowl of an avenging deity.

Chapter XXV.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind. Forever on pursuit
Of knowledge bent, it starves the grosser powers.
ARMSTRONG.

WHEN the curiosity and will of Constant Earle were once aroused nothing could divert him from his purpose. He possessed the family trait which had given his ancestors wealth. Nothing could discourage him. The plan once entered upon must be worked out. He might drop with weariness and over-exertion, but as surely as the morning brought light so certainly did hope rise as another sun. He had started in the career of authorship; never would he leave it until success crowned his efforts, or the arms of death clasped him. Every hour that his schools left him did he toil at his manuscripts. His book was approaching completion; no human possibility of securing its publication was manifest. No matter! Persevere unto the end, and then speculate upon the means of securing its issue to the world. Every time the anxiety of that publication crossed him, he shook it off and worked on. In the last stages of his work a temporary diversion, a single hour of the evening, occupied him. He was deciphering the mystic weight of brass. That diversion had assumed the dignity of a research. The brass, too, had become an object of his will. He had hastily adopted his premises, and was working upon that base. Without clue he had assumed the circular face of the brass to be the world; the weight was an antique. Hence, the probability was, that he had adopted

improper premises; as the impression of scholars was that the sphericity of the world was unknown to the ancients But he had assumed the intelligence of antiquity. If that assumption produced no fruit he had only to assume again. The investigation was a diversion of thought from his book; and this is a species of rest. He had located the figures he had assumed to be Egyptian pyramids in their proper half of the world. The figures beside them were Egyptians. The isolated man, pointing at the Greek word, was a Greek on the island of Salamis. There had the antique been found. The two Egyptians, and the single Greek, pointed towards the occident, — towards the Western hemisphere. What did the ancients know of hemispheres? No matter. The *Σοφία*, at the foot of the Greek, was a mystery. It was wisdom, no doubt. But wisdom without direction, — a vague, purposeless knowledge to him. But his assumed ancients were pointing, according to his polar arrangement of the weight, towards a real country, his own native land. Could this possibly be correct, sensible, plausible? He glanced at the records of the past, and found that great learning, scientific and geographical, had been lost to the European nations, which had not been lost to mankind. He recalled what he had forgotten, that learning found refuge in Africa; that the Arabian sages, at Senaar, had taken the measurement of a degree of latitude, and were calculating the circumference of the world, while Europe was trifling. Pliny, Pomponius Mela, and Strabo had a hearing again; they had possessed considerable knowledge of geography. Perhaps the ancients behind them knew something. What was the winged globe of the Egyptians? Was sphericity a characteristic of the Deity only? When once he had assumed the Western hemisphere as the object of that mysterious and combined pointing of the brazen trio, he connected the symbols rapidly. If that object was America, then the long, irregular line was the sea-coast; the wavy line beyond, a range of mountains; then springs beyond; then a forest; then something too large for an elephant, — a mastodon, perhaps. Then that mysterious hole with the antique lamps circling it, — what was that emblematical of? He took a map, extended the pointing fingers of the Egyptians and the Greek until they met, and found they were pointing out through the gate of the Mediterranean between the pillars of Hercules. That line extended would strike

the coast of North America. Then he climbed the Blue Ridge mountains, in imagination, passed on through the region of Salt Springs, and came to the forest. Was it the forest? It had no tops. It must be a Kentucky cane-brake. If so, the animal was surely a mammoth. Had not one locality of that country alone produced more bones and tusks than would set up in full glory one hundred of those huge breasts? If a mammoth, what else could his eyes be looking into than the Mammoth Cave? That must be the hole around which it was necessary to place lamps. Could the ancients have known of the existence of that wonderful cavern? Is there anything new under the sun? If this surmise was correct as to the cave, then his former sacred bull and crocodile of Egypt were no more nor less than symbols of regions on the Mississippi River. The cave was a little to the eastward of, or between, the range of the bison and the alligator. He laughed at this conclusion. It brought the ancients so ludicrously close to home. "I wonder if the Egyptians could have known of the existence of America?" This question became a serious study. In the investigation of this subject he familiarized himself with the mass of historical items and antiquarian data which lead to the conclusions of lost nationalities mentioned in the last chapter. The continent is stocked with curious data for the learned and the inquisitive in this department of science.

The deeper he probed this matter, the more interesting did it become to him. It was evident that, no matter how advanced in civilization the ancient inhabitants of "the dark and bloody ground" might have been, they all were eclipsed by the central light emanating from the seat of science and the arts which unquestionably had been located in Yucatan. The people to the North may have been tributary nations deriving their knowledge and light from that centre, or, what was more probable, had been a race that had sprung to civilization long after the central light was quenched, — a race mounting to culture and science from a Tartar origin, and overwhelmed by a new rush of their original stock from the North-west, which had swept away their semi-civilized nationality. Allowing the truth of the last conjecture, how ancient must have been the nationality of Yucatan? Might it not have been coeval with the Kingdom of Egypt? Might not Central America have known a primitive Menes? What

race had planned its singular architecture? Were they autochthonic or had they been wafted across the sea?

He turned with increasing ardor to the study of the Central American monuments. Their sculpture and architecture and religious symbolism were in several respects indicative of Egyptian or East Indian origin. There was the sacred ape of Egypt which was known as Hepi or the god of death. There was the winged globe, which was the Egyptian emblem of the Deity. The priests ministering at the altar had the singularity of being without beards, which Rosselin states occasioned surprise among the Asiatics as to the Egyptian hierarchy. The American priests wore leopard-skin cloaks like their prototypes on the Nile. The peculiarity of the receding forehead was common to both. In common with India and Egypt Central America exhibited in her religious sculpture the sacred lotus. Among the East Indians and Egyptians the cross appeared in their ceremonies, and was carved in the walls of their temples, sometimes as a cross of Malta and sometimes in the shape of a T. The monuments of Palenqua exhibit both, and frequently. A cross was in the temple of Serapis *as the emblem of the eternal life*, and the priests pointed it out to the victorious army of Theodosius as an argument to save their temple from destruction. On the back wall of the altar, casa No. 2, at Palenqua, the cross surmounted by a strange bird is the central object of worship, flanked by two priests offering sacrifice whose symmetry of proportion is equal to the carving on the ruined temples of Egypt. The Central Americans had also obelisks, colossal stone-heads and tall statues suggesting that character and expression of repose which is immediately recognized on the stone faces of Egypt. The traditions of the Toltecan Indians in Central America give their descent from the house of Israel, who were freed from the dominion of Pharaoh by Moses, but subsequently fell into idolatry and abandoned Moses, under the guidance of Tanub their chief. They claim to have travelled from one continent to another until they reached Central America, where they found *ancient nations*. The Spanish historians gained these traditions from the writings of caciques, whom they first taught to write. The caciques gave a line of twenty monarchs from Tanub down to Tecum Uman. Dupaix and Del Rio at once pronounced in favor of the immense antiquity of the palace or temple of Palenqua. Stevens declared that some

of the statues discovered approached the symmetry and beauty of the Greek models.

If wandering tribes from the fold of Israel had indeed reached this far-off land, they would, in their symbols of idolatrous worship, conform in some respects to the peculiarities of that Egypt whose idolatry they had learned. But would the ancient Egyptians be likely to know of the existence of their own worship in a distant hemisphere? Did they know of it? The last question approximated to a solution when the nun-like scholar came one evening of winter to the school-room of Constant Earle, and pointed out to him a passage from the history of Ancient Greece, which he had counselled her to read. He was startled by the pertinency of the historical fact to his subject of investigation.

"You have discovered the keystone for my arch which has spanned the Atlantic. This fact was once known to me, but has long been forgotten. Solon did visit Egypt, there became intimate with the great priests Psenophis, the Heliopolitan, and Senchis, the Saite. They were the most learned of all the priests of Egypt, and from them he first heard of the *Atlantic Isle*. He attempted to describe that far-off land to the Grecians in a poem. And now I recall also the fact that Plato wrote a poem descriptive of the mysterious land, which he left unfinished. Plato's mother was a descendant of the brother of Solon. He finished a part of his poem from Solon's memoirs. He described the Atlantic Island as being situated in the Atlantic Ocean, and believed it to be larger than Asia and Africa. There is another historian, Diodorus Siculus, who informs the world that it was reported that a Carthaginian discovered this land, and made it certain death for any one to settle in it. Plato, following the facts gained from his relative, Solon, described a glorious land laid out in magnificent courts, with temples, palaces, and statues, and flourishing in all the elegance and grandeur of power and art. Solon learned from the Egyptian priests that in ancient times the powerful and warlike people of Atlantis extended their career of conquest to the borders of even Egypt and Greece, but were overthrown by the armies of Ancient Greece, and at length confined to the limits of their own country. You have given me a perfect clue. My premises must be correct. Now what is the ulterior secret or signification of this brass relic?"

She had drawn near to his desk as on other evenings, and

now with joy dancing in her beautiful eyes sat watching the effect her discovery was having upon the teacher. She could not avoid perceiving the increased pallor of his countenance. He had evidently been engaged in night study, denying himself adequate rest and sleep until he was threatened with that illness and prostration which ever attend upon the violation of nature's laws. She had noted all this, but nevertheless joy beamed in her eyes to witness his enthusiasm and exultation at the historical clue she had been able to furnish.

"You must rest, Mr. Earle; the marks of excessive toil upon your face are so manifest that I tremble for your health. Will nothing induce you to care for that precious boon which God has so kindly given you? Has no one influence over you? I never see you with any friend. You appear always so lonely. Do stop for my sake then. True, I am a stranger and have no claims upon your attention. But it distresses me to see you overtasking your powers. Will you not, for the sake of your pupil, desist from your book for a little while? I shall have to leave this delightful evening school before many weeks. You may never see me again, and I feel that I ought, while I am still with you, to urge you to rest. Will you?"

He looked up quickly to those eloquent eyes.

"You are going to leave my school soon? For what?"

"Why, Mr. Earle, you knew I could not remain here forever. I have my career in life, and you know why I came to you. It was to qualify myself to teach."

"But I cannot part with you. You are the only night scholar in whom I have taken any interest."

"Will you miss the poor mutilated governess?"

She could not face the brilliant intensity of the gaze he was giving her. Her eyes drooped.

"Miss you? God knows I will miss you. Your whole life, wherever you go, will be of interest to me. Would I could help you in this life-struggle! You know not what you are assuming. I have seen the struggles of a governess to please and I have known the hard life many of them lead, shut out from sympathy, expected to answer for what is no part of themselves, the lack of brains or the obstinacy of children Indeed, I hope you may chance to meet with a family who can appreciate you, can realize that you have feelings and delicate sensibilities like other people."

"I am a resolute character, Mr. Earle, and I realize that 'life is real, life is earnest.' I do not fear for myself, and I believe in the goodness of God. If I aim to do my best, he will not leave me utterly destitute of peace and happiness. But I am glad that you will miss me. It is so pleasant to be remembered." She paused an instant and played with the end of her pencil, rolling it back and forth between her thumb and finger with her eyes cast down. Then she said, suddenly, "You have said that you will take an interest in me; will you not, then, for my sake, desist from night study for a while?" She played on with the pencil, and he noted the whiteness and delicacy of her hand. It was a model for a Greek sculptor. What in the inscrutable wisdom of Providence had been the divine motive for disfiguring so fair and graceful a girl? Poor creature! her misfortune in this cruel world would only aggravate the hardness of her lot. Her beauty could not plead for her before men. He was deeply moved by her gentleness, her amiable character, her persevering and wonderful mastery of the Spanish language, and her innate talent, grasping and comprehending everything in the realm of science that his superior attainments suggested in conversation. He said at length, after watching the movements of her hand, her downcast face, and her nun-like garb: —

"I ought to rest. I will rest more since you take the trouble to be interested in me. But I must finish my book while the inspiration is upon me, else it will be very tame, and I intend this book to be a success."

"Will you publish it soon?"

He caught that glorious light of genius from her eyes as she looked up in inquiry. The great world which was to be her task-master would not pronounce *them* mutilated. They were eyes to dwell forever in the memory of one upon whom they had once beamed in interest. He evaded her inquiry, unwilling to avow his poverty, and responded: —

"I hope to be able to publish it soon."

She supposed he alluded to the completion of his manuscripts. She knew little of that after struggle when a book is finished, and an author contends in that discouraging arena with the publishers. She knew little of that sickening round of efforts made to have talent recognized by the publishers, to induce them to see pecuniary profit in a new literary venture. She knew little of that cold, business-like

response, "Sir, we have more manuscripts presented every day for our inspection than we could hope to read if our whole time was devoted to reading alone."

"I will get the book when it comes out. What will be the name of it?"

"*Polymnia.* The name is derived from two Greek words, πολυσ, signifying *much*, and μνεια, *memory*. Polymnia was the muse that watched over the memory of events, and the establishment of truth."

"It is a strange title for a book. But I like it. I like everything that has significance. But what will you do if your book is not a success? All books do not succeed."

"Write another. I have the perseverance of Tamerlane. He persisted in his efforts when all his friends were in despair. I shall succeed, if God spares my life. I will not be trampled down in an honest purpose, a true effort to benefit my race. If, through the medium of fiction — which the careless will read — I can reiterate one great truth, or fix in the memory one historical fact, or stimulate one mind to literary improvement, I shall do well. I will not truckle to vice, nor will I be diverted from any auxiliary which virtue may lawfully bring to her aid. I do not write for the fool's cap of to-day. My laurels may be distant, but they shall be sullied with no memory of corruption, no immorality instilled by the touch of my pen. Truth and honor and virtue are just as glorious to-day as in the past. Every gift and every accomplishment in the interest of virtue are as essential to-day as they have been in any golden age of truth. I will never despair of success, and, when my lamp flickers out, the reward is with God. I shall endeavor to live justly, and employ my allotment of life as I believe most conducive to the benefit of others."

She listened carefully to him, appreciated fully his earnestness, and then said: —

"As modern society is constituted, it appears that the majority discredit everything that is noble, and believe all that is base. You have to contend with this prejudice, for within the area of what is called society you must look for patronage. There you will find selfishness enthroned. Love of scandal, love of dress, love of notoriety secured at any cost, and love of novelty the most absurd and sinful, are the motive powers; and, unless you truckle to these, or some one of these, your book will receive the cold shoulder, you

powers will be uselessly wasted, and you will sink into the grave without influence and without honor."

"You paraphrase admirably," he replied, "the language of the temptation. The devil said, 'If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.' I admit the force of your reasoning. I know how clearly you recognize my difficulties as an author writing for modern society. But yield I never will. If there is not beauty and sublimity enough to be found within the pale of moral literature to chain the attention of readers, then wither hand and crumble pen. I will starve before my books shall spread contagion, for I am the champion of truth and purity. Never will I trample over sacred memories of moral integrity and beauty to reach a false temple where literary vice is crowned."

She smiled that dubious smile which so often had puzzled him. He never knew, when that smile preceded her words, whether she was engaged in banter or earnestness. A satirical vein quietly coursed through her conversation. He fancied he had detected it often before.

"I have heard or read somewhere," she said, "that oratory is the power to talk people out of their sober and matured opinions. You have that dangerous talent, I think, Mr. Earle. You vindicate the claims of virtuous talent admirably; but, notwithstanding your disclaimer of an intention to seek literary reputation otherwise than through legitimate channels, you may discover, upon a rigid analysis of your manuscripts, that some pleasant sop has been thrown to Cerberus. The approbation of society is a powerful incentive to literary effort. Have you sugar-coated no weakness of the human family? Have you draped no heroine in the height of the fashion, whose elegant skirts and elaborate toilet may weaken some poor girl's zest for her evening prayers? Have you painted the humble cottage in the same glamour that hovers around your palace? If not, Christianity will say that you have not packed off all your treasures for heaven, but have left some elegant trifles around earthly temples to dazzle the hearts of the young and the thoughtless."

"You would narrow me down to the virtue of the Spartan lawgiver who, to banish the love of riches and display, prohibited the use of gold and silver, and substituted iron money."

"Exactly," she responded, with a merry laugh. "I fan-

cied your moral novel would have a worldly flaw in it. Talent builds for eternity; tact, on a short lease, and gets good interest. It is an old saw that."

"It is a saw then that St. Paul was proud of. He is good enough authority for me," responded Earle, a trifle annoyed.

"He was only the deputy, Mr. Earle. His principal pronounced a higher eulogium upon Christian talent unalloyed with tact, which savors of danger. 'But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck;' and again, 'Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.' If your morality in your book is not thoroughly fortified against frivolity, you may do incalculable mischief while seeking to inculcate a great truth. But don't look so annoyed about it; I have only been quizzing."

She looked up in the full splendor of her pleading eyes, and his annoyance vanished.

"You are a natural-born teaze. But I shall feel lost when you come here no more in the evening. Don't go yet."

"Yes, I must. I am later than usual;" and with a kindly smile towards the teacher she was gone. That mysterious smile pleased and haunted him.

Chapter XXVI.

With patience and perseverance the leaf of the mulberry-tree becomes satin.
ARABIAN PROVERB.

At last it was finished. What a relief! There lay the pile of manuscripts before him in one solid mass; every chapter was properly headed, punctuated, and all questionable letters reformed or marked over, that the printer might have no excuse for mistakes. *Polymnia* was completed. It was the result of weary hours stolen from rest and sleep. He had been faithful to his scholars and to the trust reposed in him by their parents. He had been faithful to the poor girls who came to him in the evenings to qualify themselves to earn their bread by teaching. He had been faithful to the memory of his Christian mother in

heaven. He had struggled to be faithful to his God. In misfortune and poverty he had turned again to the God of his childhood, and sought to atone for the lost years of his life by a firm, persistent career of virtue. His labors as a public teacher had secured him a humble support. But he was independent. It was a trying employment for nerves and patience to teach and manage a school-room of active, restless boys. But he had given satisfaction, and when his school-bills were all presented and settled his rent would be paid, every expense cleared off, and he would be owner of a small amount of money, free from debt. This was living, humble, it is true, but independent living. The labor upon his manuscripts was aspiration. Perhaps he might win renown, ampler funds, position.

But there lay the unsolved problem before him, the tediously wrought, pain-marked book. Would the world respect his labor? Would critics appreciate the mental toil? Would he be generously recognized among the brotherhood of letters? Could any critic, who in the nib of his editorial pen held his literary fate, appreciate that death-grapple with poverty and an overworked brain when he fell exhausted, senseless, before the dread phrenitis? Could any generous critic realize how earnestly and ardently he had struggled with despair? It would soon be known, provided he could overcome the huge obstacle, receive the friendly grasp of an appreciative publisher. Where should he turn now? The publisher of "Murmurs from the Deep Sea" had seen enough of "Iconoclast" and his literary efforts. He must find a new publisher. Who should the man be that was to herald the advent of a new literary light? He pondered the whole subject, examined it in every light, grew alternately hopeful and faint under the prospect. He rose up from his desk to his full, manly height. A wild yearning to be something in the world possessed him. "I will succeed if I persevere; it is the edict of the past and the present. There is no such word as fail unless God withstands me. I will aim so to live that he will aid me. I will cling to his church, to his promises, to his counsels. I will live without sin, patient, long-suffering, forgiving, charitable. I will strive to love my neighbor as myself, to pity him in misfortune, to aid him to lighten his burden. I will persevere, trusting in God for help. If this book fails I will write again and again, until something is wrought by

my pen that will do good to men and honor my memory when I am gone. Never despair. It is the twin sister of sin and presumption. Trust in God and manfully struggle. 'I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread.' Was that word spoken to cheer and to comfort and stimulate men to live near to God? Then rest on the Omnipotent arm. Be true to every noble instinct and trust God."

Hush! What was that premonitory shiver that crossed him; that undefined horror; that faintness of heart? Did the ministering spirit of his angel-mother pass near him to warn him of approaching evil, calamity, and caution him of the double armor of trust in God he must buckle on for the danger which was so soon to assail him? Did he instinctively shiver at the trial of his patience so close at hand? How could he know it, foresee it, and grow faint? Perhaps it was only the reaction of hope. He might fail, and that most signally. But whatever caused the despondency, it came. Some vague omen of impending evil shook its dusky wings in his face. He endeavored to rid himself of the sudden depression. He walked to the window. The sunbeams flooded the street. He had no secular duty to perform. It was Saturday. He struggled hard to conquer the sudden gloom of despair. The prospect was dark enough, Heaven knows. He was about to leave his silent school-room for the street, and penetrate to the heart of the city, where the publishers display their wares. He was about to enter the mart where brains are weighed, appraised, and purchased. For every ounce of merchantable brains would be given an ounce of bread. For every sentiment clothed in a new and gold-leaf garb means to buy food would be given, provided some favorite and successful author was not wholly engrossing the attention of the market, or some regular contributor to the publisher's list had been dilatory in bringing forward his manuscripts. In some crevice of the book trade he might be able to shove in his manuscripts for examination. Even then the chances were that they would be returned as unsalable. An ocean of brains surges about the office of every leading publisher, but a few waves only are admitted.

But despair is a niggardly provider. He wins who faces and wrestles with obstacles. Constant Earle turned suddenly from the window. It was his way when a purpose

was taken. His executive movements were rapid. He crossed to the desk, folded a wrapping-paper about his manuscripts, and wrote upon it in broad, clear letters, "Polymnia." Underneath the title he traced his own full name. Then he took his hat and walked down to the street, bearing the bundle under his arm. He walked briskly on, whispering, "God grant me patience under adversity, and strength to be a Christian in every trial."

He traversed the intervening streets, and emerged at length upon the broad and busy thoroughfares. It was a stirring sight. Every one was out, and the elegant carriages flashed on every side in the sun. The graceful and the beautiful, the affluent and the richly attired, were out in full glory. That had been the sphere of his birth and his life, that splendor of dress and equipage. He passed the lofty club-house. He was a member of that club. No young man had been more renowned in that easy society of gentlemen. None of the members knew where he had gone. All knew the rumor of his disinherison, but so profound was the respect entertained for his character, so generous and manly had he ever proved himself, even in the midst of his dissipation, that no one hinted at the erasion of his name from the list of membership. The payment of his dues had been neglected; but every member would have hissed at the idea that the debt would not some day be paid. They knew his stanch integrity, and, in a social club blending all elements of character, Constant Earle was pitied, respected, and by many looked for eagerly.

He passed the club-house with averted face. It was human nature. He had been wont to whirl up to the front of that elegant resort with a "turn-out" which was the admiration of all beholders. He was now a pedestrian, — poor, struggling. It was a revolution of the laws of nature, that could strip that man of his elegance, his princely port, his gracefulness. Every inch of that bearing was present to him now. Turning aside his face, wearing poor garments, bearing a huge bundle under his arm, could no more disguise Constant Earle from his former acquaintances than a fly can disguise the sun. There are some men, and some women, upon whom is stamped the elegance of birth for a lifetime. Care, anxiety, poverty, can never eradicate the original impression. Like the Etruscan gems, whose source can be recognized after the lapse of ages, and amid the dust

and debris of lost cities. He had nearly passed beyond the range of the club-house windows, and was moving on, filled with memories of the pleasant acquaintances and the easy times he had known in those elegant rooms, when a voice behind him called out, "Constant Earle, *stop!* Where are you driving so fast, old fellow? Wait for me."

He turned to behold a young gentleman, dressed in the height of the fashion, who had just emerged from the club-house. The meeting could not be avoided. His old comrade had sought for him. He extended his hand cordially. Those fingers knew no other than a warm grip for an old friend.

"I am glad to see you, Harry Codman. Very happy indeed."

"And so am I, Constant, my dear boy. I heard that you had been frightfully unfortunate, and I have been wondering where you harbored. I was sure you would come to me the first thing; I just knew you would. I felt that with all your pride you couldn't keep away from Harry Codman; and I was priding myself upon what an honor it would be to loan you several thousand dollars until you could see your way out. You knew that my father left me more than two millions. You had every right in the world to come to me. You have helped me out of many a tight place, and stuck by me like a brother; and I think it was very cruel of you never to come near me, when you knew how honored I would be to do you a temporary favor. My God! how you have suffered in mind and body! What is that under your arm? Where are you going, and what are you doing?"

The free, generous, outspoken kindness of this young debauchee's heart was too much for him. The affluent friends, who had shared his father's hospitality and business assistance, who sat about his father's pew in the church, and were linked to him by blood and by marriage, had never condescended to offer him a helping hand, never volunteered to secure him a business position, never paid any more attention to the outcast son than if he had been a dog. And here was an extravagant young man, whom every one styled a spendthrift, and declared ultimate poverty for in advance, exhibiting more real worth of heart and human sympathy than these affluent Christians possessed in combination. The words went straight to a generous and grate

ful heart. He struggled a moment, and, conquering the emotion which threatened to unnerve him, replied: —

"I never would have expected anything but assistance from your noble heart, Harry Codman. God bless you for the kindness of the thought! But I am doing quite well now. I am independent of any man. I am going to devote myself to literature; and this is my manuscript book."

"You might as well undertake to earn your living breaking stones," was the amused response. "Who lives by writing books? But you are just the same hard, unflinching mass of pride as ever. You won't let me help you. I have come forward and done my duty. You can have my check for twenty thousand dollars any day when your folly lands you in the poor-house. It is an open offer; and when you will accept it I will take your note for the amount payable in twenty years from date."

"Debt would be a heavy agony to me, Harry; I cannot assume such an obligation, or any obligation, while I am a man with health and strength. God knows how I appreciate your kindness! The very offer itself places me under obligation to you forever."

"It does, — does it? Then grant me one slight favor in return. I will not force money upon you. I know what a devilish will you possess. But promise me to send me a copy of your book, — will you? Send it to the club. I want it as a present. I won't pay you for it; I have pride as well as you. I won't pay the only man I ever really esteemed for sending me his own book."

"You shall have the first copy, Harry. I will send it to the club."

"Don't you forget it, Constant Earle, as you value your word. I would stand and talk with you by the hour, but my horses are waiting, and some gentlemen are looking out for me yonder. I promised to drive them to the Park. Good-by, old fellow. Don't forget your promise about the book!"

With a parting grasp of the hand he was off.

"What can he want with the book?" was the mental inquiry, as Constant Earle walked on. "He must intend to make Chalmers notice it in his paper; they are very intimate."

His reverie was interrupted by the sound of carriage

wheels dashing up against the curb-stone, and a voice calling to him again. It was Harry Codman.

"Constant Earle, what is to be the name of your book?'

"Polymnia."

"The devil! what a name, — Polymnia! Good-by; I am in a hurry."

The carriage was hurried off again by the spirited thorough-breds. His eyes followed the stylish equipage flashing in the sunlight. How he loved beautiful horses! His own had been sold long, long ago. A magnificent turn-out swept by. A gentleman was driving four-in-hand. The vehicle was full of ladies, beautiful, joyous. One of them paused at that instant, in her merriment, and looked after the pedestrian. He did not know her. It was May Delano.

What can he be carrying under his arm?" was her reflection. "Perhaps it is a new book. He will have clear sailing now since his brother gave him the check for ten thousand dollars. That was generous certainly. It relieved me from the duty of helping him, but I must say I would have enjoyed the pleasure of putting that new book before the world. What a grand walk he has!"

On and still on he hastened, turning as quickly as possible out of the fashionable thoroughfare where he was so likely to encounter the rich and beautiful who knew him. Another four-in-hand swept by as he left the avenue. He knew the occupants of that vehicle well and avoided them. They had dined at his father's mansion familiarly. One fair girl sat with the driver. Rumor had it that she loved Constant Earle well, whereas he had only shown her the ordinary kindness and courtesy of social life. She did not see him as he turned down the quiet side street. The instinct of some women is perhaps weaker than that of others. He looked back nevertheless at the stylish "turn-out," and recalled the luxury that in all ages follows upon the prosperity of a nation. He remembered the first four-in-hand driven in the barren land of Attica. Erichthonius was the Jerome of Greece. He hushed regrets at his fallen state and nerved himself for future struggle and ultimate triumph. Aspiration is a necesity to some natures. Constant Earle craved both an earthly and celestial crown. Are these aspirations compatible? Is the declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world," a prohibition to effort, a bar to struggle after nporalities? There have been kings who served God

It must be pleasant to be one of these. He was a man with the weaknesses and ambitions of other men. Hence these meditations, these aspirations, as he paced along.

When he reached the great publishing-house where he had resolved to make his first venture, he found a crowd gathered before the door and windows. Some fine photographs of public men, lions of the hour, had been placed in the windows Pedestrians had crowded up to study them. It was difficult to gain access to the building for a moment. Some one in the crowd improved that moment to snatch from under the arm of Constant Earle his compact bundle from behind. He turned with difficulty and confronted an old acquaintance, — the Jew who had purchased his wardrobe, when he lived in the garret. The Hebrew ejaculated at once, "Dis way, quick! — you ketch him, I see him;" and immediately pushed backward with all his strength, clearing a path for the author, who forced his way outward and reached the outside of the crowd. But the thief had been too adroit for him. He could discover no one with a bundle. It had been concealed instantly and the man was still hidden in the crowd, or had made his way off with the thronging pedestrians who filled Broadway. The author in distress scanned the bosom of every one in the vicinity. It was hopeless. The thunderbolt falls without warning.

"Could you recognize the face again? Are you sure?"

"Oh, I see him, Mr. Earle. I can tell him. Wait for me one minute. He was pale and t'in. I look for him dis way." He wandered about the outskirts of the crowd, peering into every cadaverous face. He was a zealous but so far useless coadjutor. He soon reappeared and acknowledged himself a baffled Hebrew. The peculiar face was missing. Constant Earle ran across to a policeman and informed him of his loss. The officer hurried across to the crowd, and made his way in and out through the throng, having first sent the author on a rapid tramp up Broadway. The scrutiny of the officer, the author, and the Jew availed nothing. The manuscript was lost. The policeman listened to the Hebrew's description of the thief for a moment, and then motioning to a person in the crowd sent him up the street in pursuit. The officer remained to study the appearance of every one who left the crowd. All was vain. The last hope vanished. The labor and care of months had dissolved into thin air. Polymnia was a buried hope.

"Do you live in the same place?" he inquired of the Hebrew. The question was answered in the affirmative. The Jew's testimony might be important in the future. The speculator in old clothes looked kindly upon the distressed face of the author. "I feel sorry, Mr. Earle; I see your name on de bundle, under your arm. I see 'Polymnia' on him too. Was it goods?"

"No! no! my book. I was just going in there to have it published."

"I very sorry, Mr. Earle. You never come to me as I told you."

"No! You were very kind, Rupener. I got along very well after a while. I remembered what you told me. But it was not necessary. I thank you just the same. I have a school now which gives me a living. Good-by, now. I am too unhappy to talk here. Good-by."

He extended his hand to the Hebrew, who shook it and turned away muttering, "Him very good gentleman, very good."

The Jew had his good points too. He had done what few Christians can secretly flatter themselves with. He was familiar with the kindness and charity of Madame Benon's heart. He found the author prostrate, and, unwilling or unable to spare the means to restore him to health himself, had notified that charitable lady of his condition. He had done a kind act and concealed the fact.

Chapter XXVII.

Marvel not
That Love leans sadly on his bended bow;
He hath found out the loveliness of mind,
And he is spoilt for beauty.

WILLIS.

It was night, — gloomy, cheerless, starless night. There is a physical night when the sun is lost, when dense, dismal clouds obscure the stars, when the cold wind howls in darkness, and there come strange voices out of the shrouded tumult, — voices as of lost spirits wailing. The eye dilates but finds no resting-place. No friendly sound tells of familiar

objects. One rayless, horrid pall envelops all things, and the human foot feels cautiously its way where death may lurk in sudden pitfalls. Every sense is alert and useful, or strained for use. Every sense may be the means of saving life. The human being moves as if the moment may be his last. How ardently he yearns for a star to glimmer out! There is a mental night when the soul is alone and dark; when God the great central light is hidden; when moans come up from the valley of death; when the unanchored heart drifts silently upon the black sea, aimless, fearful, encompassed by despair. The angels of life stand apart with averted faces and shrouded forms, the demons of the hereafter move sullenly nearer, with stony eyes and shadowy threatenings. With a shriek of mortal agony the soul falls prostrate, and only waits for death.

A man, shrouded in the darkness of both nights, was alone. His faculties were benumbed; his eyes closed. Hope had fled, and he muttered incoherently of death. He was not prepared to die. A moment before he had uttered his disbelief in the goodness of God, and then shrouded his face with his arms to see if in the inner blackness he could find the nonentity of God. He was bowed down in darkness, and he wished to die.

There is an Indian legend, associated with the waters of the Chattahoochee River, of an exquisitely beautiful maiden who loved a stranger secretly and unknown to her father and tribe. She managed secret interviews with him beside the flower-bordered river, and beneath the holy stars, vowing to love him eternally and alone. When suspicion of their secret meetings was reported to her father, he aroused his warriors, and, tracking the lovers, ordered the stranger to be slain. The maiden sprang forward and received in her breast the arrow intended for her lover's heart. Both were buried in the same grave. For her wonderful beauty, the Indians named her Nacoochee, The Evening Star.

Constant Earle related the legend once to his favorite night-scholar, and expressed his resolution ever afterwards to apply the name to her; for she always came to him in the evening, when he was lonely and desolate.

The solitary man, with the garland of hope crushed beneath his feet, with every aspiration blunted, with gloom and bitterness in his soul, saw, in the darkness, by the aid of his wasting fire, the door open, and Nacoochee, The Evening

Star, appear. She started in amazement at the silence and the gloom.

"Are you ill, that you shroud yourself in darkness and sit alone?"

She stood like a sister of mercy, in the red light of the dying embers. He arose by the mechanical instincts of a gentleman and lighted his lamp.

She flung back her hood, and looked earnestly at him. Her eyes were radiant in the lamp light.

"I was too desolate to sit in the light. And you were so late I thought you would not come to-night."

The voice was cold and husky. He was unnatural.

She extended a paper to him. "I bring you joy; read that."

He took it as if it were his death-warrant, and, walking slowly to the lamp on the mantel, read the column to which she pointed him. It was the leading literary organ of intellectual men in the great city, — the same paper that had condemned "Murmurs from the Deep Sea."

"POLYMNIA, THE SENSATION OF THE DAY. — We have not time or space to do full justice to this remarkable book. So great is the avidity to read it, that we understand the publishers have announced a new edition of ten thousand copies. This is unprecedented in the history of American light literature. But there is no occasion for wonder, when we recall the fact that the market is gorged with sensational productions, which are ephemeral and silly, and that the number of cultivated people who can recognize real talent is increased yearly by tens of thousands. This book deserves more than passing mention. It is the harbinger of a new literary millennium. Assuming that a large class of readers will never undertake the perusal of solid and substantial literature, the author proposed to himself a blending of fiction and fact, whereby information might be diffused, and readers stimulated to make themselves more familiar with the interesting subjects thus slightly skimmed over. We commend the purpose, and must confess our admiration at the successful manner in which subjects of real interest have been treated. Polymnia is a sugar-coating of history and science for minds not independent enough to grapple with solid text-books. It is more. It carries readers of every mental calibre through fascinating scenes, which they cannot leave without regret, and the dramatis personæ of

which are true characters of daily life. The moral influence of fiction is questionable, but, if we must read it, it is gratifying to know that one author has moral courage sufficient to withstand the corrupt issues of the English and American press, and ability to render purity and truth palatable. We commend this work cordially to the attention of our best class of readers, and sincerely wish it God-speed."

The paper fell from his hands. He was ghastly pale. For a moment a bright flush had overspread his features. He knew that Polymnia had marvellously triumphed. The laurel crown had been woven and fixed. Henceforward, fame and money were of easy attainment. The man who would be pointed out as its author was a power. Alas! alas! he bowed his head upon the mantel, in darkness and agony of soul. He spoke not, moved not, and Nacoochee wondered. No doubt the suddenness and thrill of triumph overpowered him. She stepped forward and extended to him another paper, saying: —

"Read that. The success of this book is marvellous indeed. It circulates like wildfire. You are pale as death. Read it, read it. It surpasses your most sanguine hopes."

He mechanically took the paper and read where she pointed.

"ANOTHER SENSATION ABOUT POLYMNIA. — A gentleman who is well known in our upper circles for his wealth and discernment was so charmed by the superiority of this strange book that he declared it merited universal dissemination; its author was deserving the encouragement of every enlightened American. Hence he visited the publisher at once, and left an order for five thousand copies for himself, which he directed to be presented to the principal editors and literary men throughout the country. This was truly characteristic of a son of one of our late merchant princes."

"O my God! this is too much, Harry Codman, Harry Codman!" and the unfortunate Earle covered his face with his hands in utter abandonment and despair.

"What can you mean?" exclaimed the now excited girl, coming to him and laying her white, delicate hand upon his arm. He was silent. "Tell me, tell me, are you unhappy?"

"Yes; ruined, lost. I have no hope; and the world reels

before me like the dream of a maniac. All is lost, and my only friend swindled; so generous, so noble! Welcome, death! I yearn to die."

"Oh, speak to me, Mr. Earle!" pleaded the scholar. "What do you mean? You rave indeed like a madman. Are you sane?"

"Ay, sane as the great crowd who have been created to be trampled, tortured, brutalized, and lost. Do you not know it?" he said, glaring fiercely upon her. "They have stolen my book, my record of toil and anguish; and, damn them, there is no redress. Forgive me for swearing. It is my first offence in the presence of a lady. But, oh, it is too much! I could rend that man limb from limb. I never hated before. I hate intensely, bitterly, madly; and my ambition now is to meet him. My muscles creep to clutch him once and then die. You do not know what it is to fall from a high estate. To be loved, caressed, flattered, satiated with every comfort, every luxury, and then cast a beggar upon the world, unfitted for business, and condemned to fight for daily bread. The born beggars know nothing of a gentleman's agony outcast and alone. And I have struggled so hard, strangled my pride, trampled upon my instincts; and, after all my toil, I am robbed. God has deserted me. I am truly alone now, for hope has fled. That stood by me till the last. Now all is gone. Another wears my laurels. Don't listen to me. I am going stark mad."

"You are not utterly alone," whispered a voice low and gentle as a cradle hymn. "That God whom you have forgotten for a moment has decreed that one poor girl should whisper to you of comfort. She is disfigured in your eyes and friendless, and yet her regard and respect for you are so great that she yearns to whisper of comfort and peace again. There is no night so dark that the daylight does not follow. Listen to me. Disappointments, obstacles, tortures, are the purifiers of God. They who have passed through them have glorified humanity; won crowns in every realm of science and art. This truth is a star. Look up to it. You have won half the battle. Your thoughts are traversing the land like wildfire. The beautiful conceptions of that book are in thousands of hearts. You may lose the honor of this single book. It is all you can lose. No one can imitate your style. Any subsequent attempt of this thief will demonstrate that he did not write Polymnia. You have won, be-

ing for her nation. He was deeply moved. He forgot her disfiguration. He saw only the true religious ardor of the woman, and her unbounded faith in him and his powers. His distress was temporarily forgotten. He caught her spirit, vowed to arise and shake off despondency, reassert manhood and re-erect the standard of God. The delayed Spanish lesson was forgotten. The present was too earnest. They communed long before the dying embers, and when at last she arose suddenly and in regret at the lateness of the hour, he experienced a fascination regarding her, an interest in her warm and novel, which filled him with pain to lose her society. But she was an earnest, prompt character, and wasted no time in parley after she had discovered that duty called her away. She declined as usual his escort, and walked down and out to the street-car alone.

He sat then alone studying his future. She was right. All was not dark. God would forgive him for his despair, would pardon that momentary rejection of the friendship of Heaven. He could return in sorrow and repentance to the favor of Christ; could take up his cross again; could purify his ambition, his pursuits, by a more perfect dedication of them to the glory and will of God. After all, life was short, and the wise man lives patiently, purely, meekly, for an eternity of happiness. The divine injunction to forgive his enemies was a present necessity. The opportunity for a great act of self-renunciation was before him. Was he equal to it? Was any of the heroism of Christ grafted into him? Could he forgive this man who had robbed him, snatched from him the cup of honor as he was raising its soothing draught to his lips? If he was equal to this great act, God would smile upon him, would be his friend. "Give me strength, O God!" he murmured, "and then try me." Simultaneously with the prayer came the answer. A knock sounded upon his door. "Come in." The door opened and the Hebrew stood before him. The eyes of the visitor fairly twinkled. He sat down at the invitation and looked about him. There was a hilarious look in the man's face, and the teacher noted it.

"Well, Rupener, I am glad to see you. You look pleased to-night."

"I got him, Mister Earle," was the response.

"Ah! what is that?"

"I found de man who stole de book."

"Polymnia?" ejaculated the author.

"Yes, sir. I know de man. He sell me his coat. In de pocket I find two papers. He forgot dem. You know your handwriting, sir?"

"Of course I do."

"Den look at him."

The Hebrew drew from his pocket two sheets of foolscap, tightly folded as if they had been crammed into a narrow place, perhaps pressed down under a weight. The author took them, glanced at them, and recognized two manuscript leaves of Polymnia, a part of the literary bundle of which he had been robbed.

"This is glorious news, Rupener; and did you recognize his face? Was the man who sold you his coat the same man that robbed me?"

"Yes, sir; same man. I know him."

"Will you swear to it?"

"I swear, Mister Earle. I know him."

"Then am I redeemed, saved. But wait a minute. Did you ever see this man's handwriting?"

"I got him here, Mister Earle."

The Hebrew fumbled in his pockets for a minute, and then from a handful of notes produced one and gave it to the author. He hastily read it and exclaimed: —

"It is the same handwriting as the one exhibited to me by the publisher. He copied my manuscripts, and then sold them. This and the two sheets in my handwriting, and your identification of the thief, will cause his arrest. Why, his name is Goodwin,—Henry Goodwin! Where does he live?"

"In de Bowery. He prints sometime, —he is a printer. He is very poor, and he drinks good deal."

"This is splendid, Rupener. I shall have my own again. Will you be ready to-morrow by eleven o'clock to go with me before a magistrate?"

"Yes, sir. I go if you call prompt; my business must be 'tended to. But I go with you one hour."

"Very well; that is kind of you. I will call at eleven, and will keep you away from your shop only an hour. Are you going so soon?"

"I must call on a customer to-night, Mister Earle, for some clothes."

"Very well. Good-night, Rupener."

The Hebrew vanished. The author sat listening to his

footsteps, moving downward to the street. "A kind fellow He wanted to do me a service, and he has given me a small fortune. Polymnia! Polymnia! It is my triumph. The very announcement that I have been robbed will add to the sale of the book. Now shall I triumph fourfold."

How gloriously waved the banners of victory above him! He could return again to the society in which he had been reared; the companionship with elegance and refinement had come to him once more. That society in which he had moved so royally, which had caressed and honored him, would receive him with eclat now that he had won a name, and means to dress and live like a gentleman. He had always been a favorite; now he would be a lion; and his sister, his sweet, beautiful sister, could again move in her native circle. How her sad, weary eyes would sparkle again! How thrilling the joy to be imparted at their next interview! Redeemed, honored, rescued from poverty and oblivion, the faces of the two Earles would again gleam upon society and in a new halo. Aristocrats by birth, they would walk in the glory of self-made people. If there is one joy wilder, more glorious than that of personal triumph in a generous heart, it is the consciousness that a sister is made happy, elevated to her proper sphere. Louisa Earle had made no enemies in society. Her return would be welcomed everywhere.

In the midst of these bright dreams which another day would make realities, the supernatural invaded the schoolroom. The mysterious movements of the Spirit of God were already combining events into such a dilemma that the soul of the author, alternately depressed and exalted, was to enter the arena of a great struggle. Over that contest would angels hover. Around it would trample the crowding forms of fiends robed in alluring garb and whispering profoundest sophistries. The battle of life and the supernatural contest are divergent struggles. One typifies self-aggrandizement; the other symbolizes the claims of God. One renders the victor a model citizen; the other stamps on his forehead the citizenship of heaven. The champion in one contest claims the broadest privileges secured by human law. The soldier of the cross is buffeted, spit upon, scoffed at, and returns no answer. He is no coward. But the world sneers at him. The sublimity of his self-sacrifice has moved the pagan philosopher, and even the ignorant who

fail to comprehend can wonder. They admit the beauty of the star who fail to discover its utilitarian purpose. The chosen few exult in its splendor.

In that silent hour of exultation and triumph the door of the school-room was flung open, and a woman pale, but beautiful, flung herself at the teacher's feet, moaning.

Chapter XXVIII.

He was a gentleman without fortune, but of so high a nobility that the sun could not rival him in purity and splendor.

DONNA BLANCA.

"SPARE him, spare him! For the sake of Him who died on the cross, spare him!"

He raised her to her feet. She was haggard and wild with anguish. She immediately fell down again. She kneeled to him pleading.

"What do you mean? Whom shall I spare?"

"My husband, my poor, lost husband. He robbed you. I am sure of it. I followed that Jew when my husband told me his safety was hidden in the pocket of the coat. I knew then that the proof of his crime was concealed there. I followed the Jew, and begged him to return me my husband's papers. He laughed at me. I have dogged his footsteps. I have followed him to your door, for he told me my husband had robbed a poor young man of his book. Oh, it is you! I am sure of it. My poor husband has been almost crazy with poverty and misfortune. He took to drink when he saw me and my child suffering for bread and fire. He was not always so; but poverty has maddened him. He says now that he will admit nothing; that he has written a great book and will have money enough to hire the best lawyers to defend him, and can buy up the judge too."

"That he never can," was the firm response. "The proof is so clear, so overpowering, that no judge dare decide against my claim."

"Yes, yes, sir, — so I told him. I was sure of it. But you do not know him. He has grown so desperate. He

footsteps, moving downward to the street. "A kind fellow He wanted to do me a service, and he has given me a small fortune. Polymnia! Polymnia! It is my triumph. The very announcement that I have been robbed will add to the sale of the book. Now shall I triumph fourfold."

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"That he never can," was the firm response. "The proof is so clear, so overpowering, that no judge dare decide against my claim."

"Yes, yes, sir, — so I told him. I was sure of it. But you do not know him. He has grown so desperate. He

will be found guilty through his obstinacy. And then prison. O my God! *that* will finish him. He will come out a hardened felon, and my child! O sir, spare my child! Do not make my innocent child a convict's son. Oh, do you remember your mother? Was she gentle, lovely, devoted to you? Did you love her,— do you love her now? Then listen to me. Spare my husband. He will not relent. He will not give you your rights, unless you force him That will convict him of robbery. He will be lost. I know it, I know it. Oh, save him! I have come to you because I hoped you might be a Christian. O sir, if you are, for the sake of Jesus who forgives us all our sins, forgive my husband, and save me and my child, my little baby boy!"

She fell down upon her face and sobbed aloud: "For the sake of Jesus forgive him!"

That sweet name again! Why did it ever rise before him when a great hope was on him; when a great earthly prize was within his reach; when the powerful and wealthy of the earth were ready to do him reverence? O name ever precious to him who has struggled, and suffered, and turned to it for comfort and peace! That name was pleaded before him. At his feet was urged that holy name which thrills the hearts of the angels. For the sake of Jesus, who had sacrificed all for him, who had been his brother when his own brother failed him; for the sake of Jesus upon whose breast the head of his angel-mother had rested, the woman begged for pardon. Had he not in the sincerity of his repentance a few moments before breathed the prayer, "Give me strength, O God, and then try me"? The trial had come, indeed. He looked away towards the window. He walked towards it in the struggle. He looked upward to the heavens. The stars were coming out at last. Their purity and beauty suggested that realm where there shall be no night; where every desire and aspiration of the soul shall be gratified; where the poor and the struggling who love God and their neighbor as themselves shall have eternal rest. Perhaps that day was yet to come when he would writhe in worse mortal agony than he had yet known; when not even the genial presence of "The Evening Star" would come to him. In that great trial hour perchance the memory of this night might come to him to strengthen him. Perhaps when, in his agony, he called upon the name of Jesus, then he would be heard himself. "For I have given you an example, that

ye should do as I have done unto you. This is my command ment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you."

He returned to the poor creature, prostrate and sobbing in her agony.

"Rise up. I have forgiven him."

She stood upon her feet bewildered, caught his hand, pressed it to her lips, and bathed it with her tears. "You have secured your place in heaven. O sir, God will be merciful to you some day!"

"Go to the Jew," he said, calmly but superbly. "It is the only request I shall make of you, and tell him that I have forgiven my enemy for the sake of Him who died on the cross."

One after another the stars shone out. The heavens were brightening in the glory of God. It was the brightest and clearest night of the year. The winds breathed low, and the watcher stood exultantly by the window, studying the planets. He had relinquished all for God. For that moment at least he experienced the peace which passeth all understanding. Again had he taken his stand at the foot of the ladder of fame. He had resolved to start entirely anew. How should he frame the plot of his new book; how fashion the whole that it might meet the approbation of critics, and win the favor of the public? He was poor, and it was essential to him that his books should sell. In the contemplation of his plan he passed a solitary hour, looking out upon the stars. His imagination was fertile, and a new plot soon came to him. Images of beauty and power came trooping up before him and he mentally selected from the crowd the *dramatis personæ* for his book. Weary at length he turned away to sleep. He dragged his bedding from the closet, spread it upon the school-room floor, and, committing himself to the guardianship of God, stretched himself out to sleep. He recalled the fact that the accustomed hour had not been devoted to the study of the hieroglyphics upon the brass weight. The lesson of Nacoochee had also been neglected in the excitements of the evening. How pure and lovely, and devoted to his true interests had that Christian, high-toned, mutilated girl, proved herself! The prediction that the absorption of a new undertaking would blunt the recollection of his loss was already being verified. She was right. The weeks and months looked far away when he would again

approach the completion of a book, but he was convinced already that his new plot was far superior to that of Polymnia. He would eclipse everything this time, *Deo volente* Other thoughts occupied him then before he slept. His school-term was approaching completion. He had already despatched his bills to his patrons. He desired to settle his accounts, pay up the rent of his school-room, and clear off his indebtedness for fuel, lights, and the provisions which he purchased and cooked for himself. Some of the patrons had responded promptly to his demands by sending in their checks. Others were dilatory. This was inexcusable, as they were wealthy and he was poor. He was already crowded for payment by his creditors. He hoped this embarrassment would not continue. In the anxiety of it he fell asleep, with the stars shining down on him through the window.

He awoke in the morning to another day of teaching, noise, and confusion. A dizzy pain possessed his head all day. He struggled against it, and was happy when the evening hour arrived and the boisterous boys cleared off for their homes. While he was eating his frugal meal the postman brought him several letters. They were all from his patrons regarding school-bills. A few enclosed money. Several letters alarmed him. There was a financial panic pervading the city. Some of his patrons assured him that they had suspended payment in consequence of the pressure upon them. He understood thoroughly the significance of that business phraseology. They had failed, and his pay for his services was gone — hopelessly gone. In alarm he seized a pen and paper, footing up his accounts, and omitting the sums due from them. Terror mastered him. He was ruined. After paying out every available dollar he would be partly in debt for the rent of his school-room. The landlord was inexorable, and held a chattel mortgage upon his bedding, desks, seats, lamps, everything. He was utterly and hopelessly a beggar. There was no evading the blackness of his fate. The failure of a few patrons had shipwrecked him utterly. One of the sophistical fiends, who had whispered to him when the woman knelt before him for the pardon of her husband, drew near to him and hissed in his ear, "I told you it would be madness to forgive that thief. Where are you now? How beautiful and glittering is that publisher's gold now! Ha! Ha! This comes of serving God. What a friend!

Not a hand will he raise to help you. Don't look to him for assistance. Help yourself if you can. That is wisdom. It is all poetry, all romance, this Christianity. It never buys you one loaf of bread. True, genuine philosophy bids you avoid theories of the supernatural. Grasp the opportunities of making money as they pass you. Get money. Keep it; spend it on yourself, on your pleasures, and let the supernatural take care of itself. Some people make a good thing of Christianity. They cant and draw large salaries. Use it in this way if you like. But never again do so foolish an act as to throw away your money, or forgive your enemies when they walk away with your purse. It is not practical life. It is romantic. It is silly. Always chase a thief; lock him up in prison, and recover your money. Take just what the law of the land allows you. Steer clear of sentiments. They do you no earthly good. Human laws, as administered in America, are just about as sensible as they can be made. Attend to business, save your money for yourself, have no soft places in your skull for beggars, put the police on the track of thieves, foreclose your mortgages when you have the mortgagor in a tight place, and buy in the property. Keep just within the law and take all that it allows. You will then be an admirable citizen, become prosperous, forgive nobody when the act costs you anything, and never have such an ugly night before you as you are likely to have to-night, with a chattel mortgage over you and a sharp, practical, business landlord to put it through. You pardoned the man who stole your cash manuscripts for the sake of Christ,—a pure sentiment. Now watch for your reward. You will have minutes of pure, romantic exaltation, a fanatical dream, and then you will have hours of regret, of poverty, of struggle. How you will yearn after the money that thief has plundered you of! Stop right here, Constant Earle, and start a practical, money-making, easy life from this moment. Do exactly as the saints in your father's church would do under similar circumstances. Carry off the school-lamps and represent that they were all broken, when the landlord comes around to foreclose. Hide away a few chairs for future use. They will hardly be missed. Have one desk removed immediately. You know you will need something to write your future books upon, and it will be so convenient. Then the landlord will not miss these few things, will consider you bankrupt entirely and

will make himself contented with what he can lay his hands on. And since you have *failed*, in business parlance, make your failure complete. Never think of paying out the funds you have in hand. Save them for future use; you will have trouble enough on your hands. Do not fear about that. There is only one contingency upon which you should pay your debts in part. If you anticipate in the hereafter making future purchases from any of these creditors, or renting another room from this landlord, it may be necessary to establish your credit by paying all you can raise. But, if you intend to seek other creditors, never think of paying a cent. It is not practical, and what is not practical is simply foolish. Be careful not to do another silly act for Christ. Drop the supernatural and cease to be a poet or a Christian. Observe the conduct of your brother. He enjoys, lives comfortably, and has respect. He is a courteous gentleman and every one likes him. He is guilty of no foolishness, has no sentiments that do not afford him pleasure and profit. Go to him; relinquish that picture to him for a large sum. It is all pure sentiment you have about that picture. Your mother is dust. She will know nothing of the disposition you make of it. Be a practical man and quit studying the supernatural. You might as well be carried away by the table-tipping mania as to believe Christianity. It is high time you were looking at life practically."

To all this temptation, Constant Earle, the ruined teacher and author, listened unto the end. He was very sad and lonely and sick. He shook his head at it all. He opened his desk, and, taking out his mother's Bible, read, for the hundredth time, the lines written on the fly-leaf: "*Constant Earle, from his mother. 'Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret places of thunder; I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.'*" This man, upon whose personal beauty the wear of thirty-one years had produced no damaging effect, possessed a natural heroism of character. When a school-boy, he had been the coryphæus of his class. He risked his neck upon the wildest horses, climbed higher in the yellow pines, and stood for a beating by larger boys, than any scholar of his years. He was ignorant of fear, apparently, and yet he was regarded everywhere as of gentle nature and refined sensibilities. When a college student, he was an acknowledged leader in whatever spree required adroitness and courage. When he had left the

shades of his "alma mater," he entered the gymnasiums of his native city, and won high repute as an athlete. He was ever a leader when muscle and prowess were in demand. But a keen, native sense of sublimity and justice ever swayed his actions. He had the reputation of rashness, but never of meanness. A fine, poetical sense of justice and integrity ever accompanied him. He was a poet, and hence an idealist. No man was more likely to receive, in its intensity, the impression of Christian heroism. His Spartan nature and instincts qualified him for the appreciation of Christ. Then upon the friendly soil of his heart a Christian mother scattered the seeds of faith, and after-years witnessed how deep root they had taken. But natures like to his are susceptible to alternate exaltations and depressions. The foul fiend watches their development in fear and hope. Won to himself, they are mighty auxiliaries; lost to him, they are giant enemies. They have a magnetism of character that draws powerfully for good or evil. The personal beauty of Constant Earle, and his magnetic sympathy in the mental and physical order, gave him dangerous power in the society of women. He could fascinate female intellect without effort, no matter how exalted the type. He impressed all women with his sincerity and gentleness. These traits, blended with a large intellectuality, rendered him comparatively irresistible. It was apparent what God had made him. It was difficult to know what power Satan might have gained over him. Hence the pure instincts of women were ever attracted towards him.

But the Christian faith had woven about his heart a charm difficult to be dissolved. It seemed to him as grand and glorious to sacrifice and fight for Christ, ay, grander than to die for country or for king. The poetic and the chivalric in him made him cling to that cause in which his sympathies and his sense of justice had once been enlisted. Christ is the ideal of true heroism, as of everything else noble and grand. On the battle plains of Palestine, Earle would have been a Godfrey, "true to the Red-Cross flag." It would require an extraordinary array of temptations to induce him to abandon his faith now. But he was fearfully hemmed in at this moment by misfortunes. In a moment of Christian enthusiasm he had forgiven a thief without pledge, and given him his manuscripts. The world denominates such self-renunciation madness. The man had not solicited

pardon. What! forgive a thief who asked not for forgiveness, was not penitent, would not restore? Did Christ attach these conditions, when he exhorted men to the forgiveness of those who had injured? "Pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." Before they repent? Ay, on the instant. "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do."

How utterly abandoned and desolate he seemed, with his poverty staring him in the face! Worse than all, the landlord would deem himself swindled out of part of his rent. He was conscious of his innocence. Could he persuade the landlord that he had not wilfully failed in his payment, that he had economized his means, and saved everything to meet his liabilities? It was doubtful. And then the future. Where should he turn for bread next? What should he undertake? Where should he go? He was deeply humiliated and perplexed, sitting there alone with the solemn evening shadows creeping upon him. He must decide upon something immediately. The night-school was close at hand. If the landlord ejected him from the premises, he must notify his night-scholars at once. There was no time for delay. He arose, took his hat and hurried away down the street. He walked rapidly, and reached the mansion of his landlord. It was a sumptuous dwelling, the abode of wealth. How dizzy and humiliated he felt, standing before the entrance of affluence! A servant responded to his summons. The master of the house was at home, and would see him. He passed into the drawing-room, and the servant lighted the chandeliers. Presently the landlord appeared, a thin, careworn, but crafty man of business. He listened to the details of the failure, and examined the letters of the delinquent patrons. A scowl was upon his features. The financial panic was wide-spread, and he was himself a heavy loser by it. More valuable tenants than the school-teacher had failed him. He laid aside the letters, and looked long and steadily at his tenant. An eye bright and honest as the evening star returned his scrutiny. Finally, after mature reflection, he said, returning the letters, "I am very much embarrassed by these failures myself, and I hoped to meet my payments by the combination of small rents like yours. You have been unfortunate; but your promptitude in coming to me is a guaranty of your integrity. Still, you are shipwrecked, and I must make the best of it. I have an application for

your room, and shall put in another tenant right away. I shall have to foreclose my mortgage, and sell your furniture."

"Very well, sir; here is all the rent I could save for you. You will find every article of my effects as in your list. If you cannot satisfy your debt out of my furniture, perhaps a lamp of some value, which was a gift, will aid towards that object. Good-evening, sir."

Chapter XXIX.

Wild as the autumnal gust the hand of time
Flies o'er his mystic lyre; in shadowy dance
The alternate groups of joy and grief advance,
Responsive to his varying strains sublime.

COLERIDGE.

He sat alone. The night-school had been dismissed for the last time. In another hour the agent of the landlord would arrive to dispossess him, and take the key. Then he would walk forth, friendless, homeless, without a place to lay his head. He would wander up and down the streets of a great city with no physical burden but a Bible and a brass weight,—the antique from Salamis. Why did he linger then? It was desirable that he should go early to the lodging-place of his sister, to leave her the charge of his book and his brass weight, until he could find a home. Why this useless reverie then? The homeless have no time for reveries. But he lingered on, starting at every sound from the street, and then relapsing again into gloom. All was gloom, night, hopelessness. But the human heart is a wonderful mechanism. It puts forth tendrils, in its loneliness even about a tree or a stone. It is hard to have nothing to love, nothing to talk to, nothing to be interested in. There was one object of regard left to him yet. In the distress of his condition it assumed large proportions; it looked precious, valuable, now, and more so that he was about to lose it. He had not been fully conscious how much inherent fascination it possessed for him. But now he longed to bid that object farewell. Something like bitter disappointment tugged at his heart-strings, that he was delayed so long in

seeing it. At last he grew restless indeed, and walked to the window peering out into the night. It was not there. There was no sign of its coming. Something must have happened. He knew that before. Then why should he repeat that stale apprehension? It was too late now to expect anything. There had been some natural detention. It had occurred before; why not again? And yet he could not relinquish all to night and gloom. His impatience increased to distress. Must he go forth alone, uncheered and forsaken? Hark! some one was approaching. The street door opened, surely! Feet were ascending to the school-room. It was the agent of the landlord. He was no longer master of a school-room and a school. He was already dispossessed. He arose with his book and his antique, and passed the agent as he entered. The key was in the door; he had nothing to do but to leave. He turned at the landing, and gazed back into the school-room with regret. It had been a species of home to him; it had sheltered him from the cold of the street. He had grown familiar with every glass in its windows, every crack and stain upon its walls. He had studied and struggled mentally there; he had prayed there and been comforted there. There was a memory upon him, at this moment, more vivid than all these. There had he met and known Nacoochee, The Evening Star. Would he never see that star arise again? For this he tarried, hoping against hope. She was generally the earliest to come and leave. Sometimes she had been detained away until all the female pupils had retired; this was of rare occurrence. Sometimes she did not come at all. God grant that this might not happen to be one of those lonely times! It was his last night, and he longed to see his Spanish scholar once more. He might never meet her again. Who is sure of any meeting in the great metropolis? She was going forth as a governess. He prayed God that she might happen to come. He slowly moved down the hall stairs, and stood in the street door waiting for her. It was quite dark; no stars were out. He looked away into the gloom and blackness of the night. He grew sick at heart and walked slowly up the street. All was gone for the poor outcast scholar. All was dark; the Evening Star came not. Nacoochee was obscured forever.

He wandered slowly on in the gloom. There was no propelling motive for haste. He had no manuscript which

demanded renewed exertion, no chapter which demanded attention. He had not yet collected paper for a new book. The plan of another book was inchoate. Would he ever commence in earnest again? Would he ever have time again for literary labor? It was manifest enough that a struggle was before him as painful as any he had experienced. He might starve this time. A pauper's grave was a dismal prospect for a son of the great house of Earle. He must apply somewhere early for work. He must find some shelter for the night. That was an imperative preliminary. It would never do, whispered his noble heart, to inform his sister of his trouble. It would only aggravate her own distress to know that he had fallen in the midst of his hopes; that he was without a roof to cover him. It was better to find work first. Impressed with this thought, he tied his book and weight in his handkerchief, making a small bundle easily carried in his hand. There were small shops and markets still open on the narrow streets through which he was wandering. It would be well to attempt to find work in these, that he might at least gain a shelter for the night. He turned into the first shop he met, and requested work, that he might earn a lodging for the night. There were several customers hurrying up their purchases before the shop closed. The proprietor looked at the applicant in surprise. He had no occasion to employ more help in his business. It was too late at night, he suggested, to be hunting up a place. Then Earle went on to another shop. He received a similar response. He tried a third and a fourth with the like success. The clerks and employes were already putting up the shutters for the night. His prospects were gloomy enough. His heart almost failed him. He recollected the lawyers who had paid him for copying legal papers. But they were far away at their homes, and their office was closed long ago. He resolved to seek them on the morrow. He recollected that his clear, manly handwriting had given them perfect satisfaction. It was hard, incessant toil to write for them, and the pecuniary compensation was a pittance. Still it was something that would give him shelter and coarse food. His instincts revolted at manual labor, for that would exhaust him, and give him no opportunity to write and aspire to something in the future. The heavy clock near at hand tolled solemnly the hour, and his heart sank. Where should he sleep? He wandered on and on, finding no kind

hand to grasp his own; no one to give him a shelter upon his promise of work on the morrow. It was well. He had placed his whole trust in God. It would be strange indeed if succor should be long delayed. Weary at length, and alarmed by the lateness of the hour, he found himself again in the street where he had taught his schools. It could not have been many rods from his late school-room that he found at length a large coal-yard filled with buildings and sheds, and apparently deserted. The great gate was open, and no light gleamed from the window of the little office. Some negligence of the gate-closer had left the wanderer an opportunity to sleep. He stole quietly under a deserted shed, hid himself behind a bank of coal, and laid down to sleep upon a pile of planks which had been carefully deposited there. He borrowed a lodging-place, intending to offer his labor for the night's use of the premises. He was exhausted, and slept soundly as a king upon his hard bed.

Scarcely had he abandoned his school-room forever, when a female appeared upon the scene. His footsteps had barely died away in the distance when she came rapidly down the street and turned into the hall leading to the school. She passed up the steps and entered the school-room unannounced. What was her amazement to discover a stranger in possession of the premises!

"Where is Mr. Earle, the teacher?"

"Gone up the spout," was the laconic and figurative response.

"What do you mean? I must see him. I have business with him."

"You won't find him here. He has cleared out for good."

"Gone!" she exclaimed.

"That's the word; gone for good. He's never coming back. He's busted up."

"Can't you speak more plainly to me?"

"Why, certing. Mister Earle couldn't or wouldn't pay his rent for this ere place, and the landlord's turned him out and seized his traps."

"Was he so poor, then?"

"So it appears. He left to-night with nothin', 'cepting what he's got on his back, and a notion or two in his bundle."

"I am amazed, sir. I never suspected this."

"Nor nobody else. He was fair-spoken, they say, and was took to be honest."

"So he was," she said, firmly. "He was honest if any man ever is. He must have been unfortunate."

"I can't dispute nothin' you're sayin', mum, seein' as how I don't know all the perticklers. He left a mighty pooty lamp here to help pay up his debts. Jest look at that critter! I believe that's an owl."

He was engaged in cleaning up the student's lamp at that moment.

"And he left that?"

"He did, and he told the landlord to sell it, to help towards the amount due. Most men would have sneaked off with such a trifle. I 'spose he couldn't carry it, or hadn't no place to put it into."

"Your conjecture is of a piece with your cramped nature," she muttered, and then added, in a louder key, "Is there no way to track Mr. Earle out? Where has he gone?"

"Couldn't say," was the responsive brevity.

"Good-evening, sir."

"Good-night, mum;" and thus this couple parted.

She walked down to the street door, and stood in the darkness studying her next move. She was inexpressibly sad. She had counted firmly upon this interview. He had fled and left no sign. The evening star had arisen. Nacoochee had come. How little she knew of that weary waiting for her! She fancied he had gone off, unmindful of her. In his trouble he had forgotten her no doubt. Why should he think of her, a poor, mutilated girl? The school was ended. She would not see him again. She was desolate in heart as she walked slowly around the next corner and disappeared.

On the following day an elegant carriage stopped before the school-room. Its inmates were two ladies dressed in the height of the fashion. One was a widow of thirty-four, dark-eyed and pretty, not beautiful. Her companion was older, and was her familiar. The two were in the habit of exchanging their facts and surmises. The mutual discussion of these materials constituted their friendship. The emotion was not profound or permanent, — only society friendship, that communion of souls which satisfies the masses. They moved in different circles; hence their stock in trade was large. They dissected weekly two extensive city cliques. They criticised their fellow-citizens, took out their acquaint-

ances' false teeth at night, counted their braids of false hair, tapped upon their shoulders and bosoms for padding, knew to a nicety the quality of their rouge, how much they were worth, whom they flirted with, and the sum total of their piety and worth. They never rehearsed each other's failings or weaknesses, except to select circles. These circles never having chanced to compare notes, the two friends continued to kiss as usual, and "my dear" each other. Scratching was a future contingency.

"My dear Mrs. Gillmore," suggested the familiar, as they waited before the school-room, while the footman ran up the stairs to summon the school-teacher, "it appears to me that you are fond of visiting this school. The teacher is very handsome, — is he not?"

"I think so — very," giggled the friend, in response. "Do you think that brings me here sometimes?"

"I think it brings you here *often*."

"La! — do you, now? I never thought of such a thing. But he *is* good-looking, — isn't he?"

"You never could think, in your position, of marrying a school-teacher, my dear."

"Alas, dear; I never can marry again. My loss was too great."

"You dear, sweet soul! I don't think you ought, when you had such a charming man before, unless, indeed, you could marry something *distingue*."

"But it is very lonely sometimes. I am such a domestic woman, I have many solitary nights."

"Exactly; you were at five parties last week, and wore a different dress each time."

"You know that is on account of my dear children. It is essential for them that their mother should retain her position in society. They will soon be on the stage, you know."

"That will be seven or eight years yet, my dear. But here comes Thomas with some intelligence of your Adonis."

"Hush! the servants will hear you."

The stately Thomas delivered his answer thus: —

"He's gone to smash, mum. They've sold out his furniture and things, and he have gone away."

"That is too bad," exclaimed his mistress. "I feared his note did not tell me all. What shall I do with my boy? Poor fellow! — is there no way to find him?"

"The agent's up there, and he have charge of his furni-

sure, mum, and he says the teacher have gone and won't come back; and nobody knows where he's gone to."

"Dear me! dear me! That will do, Thomas. Drive now to Stewart's."

The carriage whirled away, and one lady had lost her vivacity. She answered abstractedly all her familiar's efforts to arouse her. She was wondering if the teacher was treasuring up the owl-fashioned lamp in his misfortune. The memory of the wanderer's face haunted her. Few women forgot it. Like the countenance of Crishna, "that idol of women, it was heroic, beautiful, exciting the imagination, and breathing music from the eyes." Ahmed ben Abdalaziz, in his "Treatise on Jewels," affirms that the serpent which fixes his eyes on the lustre of the emerald instantly becomes blind. The woman who once had gazed into the lustrous eyes of Constant Earle was forever blinded to all other male beauty.

While Mrs. Gillmore was searching for the teacher, he was employed in a new capacity. He had arisen at dawn from his hard bed, and, finding no person astir in the coal-yard, had walked out through the great gate. The sounds of the early risers, preparing for the business of the day, greeted his ear. With the dawn had come hope, — hope to be able to find work. He wandered on, making inquiries of every one he met where he could find employment. No one knew. Some were impatient of questions. Others were civil in their replies. He entered business places in his search, and met with no better success. Finally he paused, after a long and fruitless walk and search, to rest himself. He had walked on into the fashionable portion of the metropolis. The dwellings around him on every side were elegant. The sun was high, and the glory of the day seemed to mock him. The son of affluent parents stood silently in the midst of wealth, half famished and footsore. He knew not where next to turn for a morning meal. His attention was soon attracted by the sight of a boy seated upon a stool in the entrance of a carriage-house, on the opposite side of the street. The little fellow was swaying back and forth on his seat and occasionally moaning. He appeared to be in distress, and the author approached him kindly. He saw that he was a cripple, and, placing his hand upon the boy's shoulder, he said, gently: —

"Poor boy, you are in trouble. Can I help you?"

The little cripple looked up at those friendly words. They came upon his ears like music. But he only shook his head and pointed inward to the stalls behind the carriage-house.

"Shall I go in and see what is the trouble?"

"Oh, yes, sir; you may. But there aint no hope. He's a-goin' fast."

The boy resumed his moaning, and the author passed on beyond the glittering vehicles, which indicated an affluent owner. There were a superb family carriage, a Clarence and a rockaway, each having upon the panel of the door a small, turreted castle of solid silver, holding three archers with bent bows. The harness, which was hung against the walls, was marked with a silver D. A closet door was partly open, where hung a coachman's livery of light gray with silver buttons. The cripple appeared to be the only custodian of the place. There were two spacious stalls beyond, occupied by black carriage-horses with a white star in their foreheads. There was another stall beyond these unoccupied. Its former tenant was lying upon a bed of straw on the floor of the open space, and was apparently slowly dying. One glance of that practised, searching eye of blue revealed the truth; it was an English hunter, a thorough-bred, magnificently limbed, struggling with death. A back window poured a flood of light upon the open space. The struggling monarch of the turf displayed a glossy coat of the richest, darkest, chestnut-brown. It was a pitiful sight to witness the distress of so imperial a racer. Constant Earle was as devoted to beautiful horses as Caligula to the ivory-stabled Incitatus. He was a monarch in the saddle, and had been from his youth up. He knew the physiology and habits of a racer infallibly. He had ever been proud in his palmy days of his equine knowledge. His sympathy was at once enlisted for the abandoned beast. He laid aside his bundle and carefully scrutinized the struggling steed. It was evident from the accumulation of bottles and veterinary articles lying around that the horse had received considerable attention before he had been left to his fate. He had evidently been bled, and this appeared to gratify the heretofore silent spectator, for he muttered, "That was all right if undertaken early in the disease; but what have they been using this infernal hellebore for? That produces increased determination of blood to the brain. Poor beast! he has been bunglingly doctored to his detriment. What is this stuff?

Ah! farina of the croton. That is well enough. And here is the probang; and what is this mess? I see, — gruel. That will do sometimes when the horse is unconscious. And this stuff is digitalis. Very good! and here is emetic tartar and nitre. They did the best they knew; but they were bunglers after all. Hellebore — what nonsense that was!"

He approached the horse and gave him a quick, hard slap with his hand. The poor beast appeared to shrink from the blow.

"Exactly. I knew it was not apoplexy. How fearfully his eye brightens now! I don't like that. The membrane of the eye is too red, too red for that transparency of the cornea. How his nostril labors, expanding and quivering! His respiration is short and quick. His ears are bent forward. He catches every sound. Poor brute! he is too beautiful to die." He sprang back quickly. The horse dashed violently from side to side. He reared partially on his hind legs. He whirled round and round for a moment, and then fell back upon the straw and laid quietly for a time in exhaustion. Again the teacher approached him and examined his forehead. He had evidently been blistered there. "Poor brute! they have done nearly everything for you. They have done too much at that. Now I am going to try my hand. You shan't die, old fellow, without one more trial."

He drew a knife from his pocket and instantly opened both jugulars. It required both courage and adroitness, for the paroxysm almost immediately returned again. He barely escaped the violent effects of a renewal of the spasm. The horse whirled round and round again, bit and tore himself, darted furiously at everything within reach, and then again fell back exhausted. Then Constant Earle shouted to the cripple: "Come here quick! Don't you dare to delay one second!"

Chapter XXX.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

Byron

The boy ceased his moaning immediately, startled by the imperious tones of a voice which before had been so kind and gentle. He started from his seat and hobbled away into the stable. The stranger was standing over the beloved object of his distress. The horse was so quiet that he feared he was dead. He had little time to indulge his feelings over the event.

"Whose horse is this?"

"Miss Delano owns him, sir," replied the boy, glancing curiously at the interrogator, whose tones were peremptory and admitted of no dubious replies.

"Why is he left here alone?"

"They guv him up, sir. The doctor said, 'twant no use; he got ter die; and so Mike he went and got drunk, he feel so bad."

"Pretty business that. Was Mike the coachman?"

"Yes, sir. He be the man what stays here. Mike's sound; but 'twant no use, sir. The doctor he tell us so."

"The doctor don't know everything. I believe I can save that horse yet."

"Oh! yer don't mean it, sir," exclaimed the boy, a flash of joy lighting his face. "Miss Delano she would die o' joy, sir. Poor Miss Delano, she sot up here half the night. She did indeed, sir. She couldn't gin him up, sir. And when the doctor told her this mornin' as how he couldn't last two hours, poor thing, she busted out cryin', and she's in the house there a-lookin' so down it would make yer heart ache to see her. She jest loves that horse to death, but she said as how she couldn't stay to see him die nohow. She said she b'lieved as how he knowd more than some men, and Mike he up and said so too."

"Well, there's a chance, boy, for you to lighten her heart. The ordinary remedies have failed. It's a slim chance; but we'll try it. Is there any German apothecary about here?"

"There's Mister Brown, sir. He's four blocks off."

"He's not a German. That's not a German name, — is it?"

The boy looked puzzled. Then a bright idea struck him.

"Is them the fellers as smokes the pipes this way?"

He crooked up his forefinger in perfect imitation of a German short pipe. The Teutonic symbol was so admirably counterfeited that the teacher smiled.

"Yes, that's it. Now is there an apothecary near here that smokes one of those pipes, has a long light-colored beard and a blue eye?"

"Yes, sir. I know jest the man, — way down here on that avenue. I seen Miss Delano goin' there one time."

"Well, then, take this paper to him, and tell him that it's for Miss Delano's horse. Tell him that I say American apothecaries can't put up those things. He can understand it probably. It's what they give horses in Arabia when they're most gone. They gather it in the deserts out there. Now be off in a hurry. Away you go."

He had scribbled on a fragment of paper as he talked.

The excited cripple needed no spur. He hobbled away instantly; thump, thump, thump, over the stable floor, and then out on to the pavement. No human being realized more than himself the distress of his kind mistress. The one sound limb accomplished wonders along the pavement. "Oh, if the horse would only git well!" He whispered the eager words to himself as he hobbled along.

The teacher turned his attention to the horse. The beast was remarkably quiet. A stupor seemed to possess him. He feared that all remedies were indeed too late. He noted every delicate outline of the superb courser. How gloriously and powerfully knit were his limbs! How glossy his chestnut coat! How unmistakably an aristocrat was that graceful beast! How strange that a young lady should choose that fleet and imperial hunter for her "mount"! Who could she be? Delano? Delano? That was not an unfamiliar name. It recalled the exiles from France; the edict of Nantes. There could be no mistaking the origin of that name. It had the true ring of that noble people, the persecution of whom, in France, enriched the blood of many lands.

"Whoever she is I'll try to save her horse. I don't wonder she feels for him, — the noble, beautiful beast!"

He drew a stool near to the horse and sat patiently waiting for the messenger's return. He watched every symptom

of the failing steed. He would not have tarried there so long unless a long experience in the treatment of horses had left him a faint ray of hope. It would be pleasant to make one girl's heart glad. He had untied his bundle to tear out a blank leaf of his Bible to write the prescription upon. The handkerchief lay untied upon a box. The weight and book were lying upon it. He arose, took up the Bible, and read several verses in it. The horse was lying almost quiet. He became absorbed in some meditation upon a passage of Scripture and noted not the flight of time. He was interrupted by the entrance of the boy. Thump, thump, thump, he came over the floor-planks of the carriage-house. Constant Earle laid aside the book and advanced towards him. He feared that the unusual nature of the prescription would prevent the boy finding it. But no! The cripple was out of breath. He handed a vial to the teacher. He was too exhausted to speak for a moment. He had hurried as if the patient had been a human being. One glance at the marks upon the wrapper assured the teacher of his success. With an exclamation of joy he tore off the paper and held the fluid up to the light. The sunbeams revealed a dark, semi-transparent liquid. He removed the cork and tested the integrity of the contents by applying a drop to his lips. All right. He had grown familiar with that taste upon the *steppes* of Arabia. He called the boy to his assistance.

"Kneel down there, if you can, with your crutch, and hold this pitchfork handle in his mouth, as long as you can."

The cripple managed to secure a place upon the floor, while Earle pried open the mouth of the horse with the handle. It was a difficult feat to accomplish, for the strength of the beast was not entirely gone. He struggled and then quietly submitted. The two held his head down until the contents of the vial were poured into his throat. Then they clung to the handle, holding him steady for a moment. The cripple then drew himself away and Earle withdrew the pitchfork. It looked hopeless enough. The poor brute panted as if he were dying. Long did the two keep watch, one in hope, the other in scientific study. Finally the teacher opened another window of the stable and admitted a flood of light upon the head of the horse.

"Ah! his eye responds to the action of light; that is good."

He sat down then and watched patiently for an hour.

The terrible laboring of the horse had ceased. It was due to exhaustion, or improvement, he knew not which. The cripple hobbled about the stable, and, unnoticed, took up the teacher's book and looked into it. Then he came back to the horse.

"He is better, aint he, sir?"

"Yes, I am sure of it. He is relieved; look at his eyes. Now he may be saved by careful feeding. He must have that food which has been prepared yonder. They fixed that all right. When the inflammation abates, and appetite returns, everything depends upon the quantity and quality of his food. Can't you get me something to eat? I am very hungry. What is in that tin-pail yonder?"

"That's my dinner, sir. But you kin have it; I kin git plenty more."

A second invitation was not needed. Earle devoured the contents of the pail eagerly. Then he pried into every nook and corner of the stables to see what could be done for the horse. He indicated to the boy what treatment and food were necessary for complete restoration. For fear that any mistake might be made, upon the return of the coachman from his spree, he tore out another blank leaf from his Bible, and wrote out directions minutely with his lead pencil.

"Give that to your mistress, and tell her to watch the men who nurse this horse. I think he may get well if there is no more bungling. Do you hear?"

"I'll gin it to her right off."

"That's right. Tell her my medicine will save him, but it was a narrow escape. Nothing could have saved him but that vial. He is doing well now."

"By jingo! you're a snorter, sir. Miss Delano will be most crazy when she hears it. I'll run now and tell her," and away he hobbled, his black eyes snapping with delight.

Constant Earle tied up his bundle again and left the stable much refreshed by Shorty's dinner. He intended now to proceed directly to the office of the lawyers and solicit more papers to copy. But he was intercepted at the end of the second block. A carriage paused suddenly at the curbstone. A voice called to him from the window, and a gentleman's hand beckoned to him. He approached the vehicle in surprise. A lady was there also. He recognized her at once as the young lady who had come to the school-room with her father to thank him for saving her life. Montrose Earle

had informed Miss Deming and her father of the whereabouts of the rescuer. The two had gone at once to the school and offered to forward the teacher's interests by any means in their power. He had declined accepting any favor from them, as he was prosperous with his school, and they, knowing of the promise of Montrose Earle to send him a large check, had pressed him no further. With profuse expressions of their gratitude and sense of his heroism they had left him. But their hearts were too grateful to let the matter rest there. They had diligently sought out preferment for the teacher, and, after many failures, had discovered a place suited, as they hoped and believed, for him.

"We have a proposition to make you, sir," was the salutation of Mr. Deming "It may prove to be a valuable matter to you in time. Are you open to propositions to occupy a position as teacher?"

"If I am qualified for it," was the response of the bewildered outcast.

"There is a place just vacant by death, in the University. The Greek tutor has died, and I am one who has influence to exert in filling the place. The salary is one thousand dollars. But here is the inducement to you: if you give satisfaction as tutor the chances are that you will be promoted in time to the chair of the Greek Professor. He is an old man, an invalid, and my opinion is that his chair will soon be vacant. Will you accept the tutorship? I would be happy indeed to promote the interests of one who has saved the life of my child."

He spoke with evident emotion. His daughter sat eagerly watching for the reply. The poor scholar had become so familiar with sudden blows of misfortune, that when a shaft of the wild lightning of joy reached him he was crushed. He struggled hard to be calm. He was overwhelmed with this good fortune, this favor of Heaven. He appeared to reflect. He had not the remotest idea of declining. He had not even shelter for the night. He replied then as calmly as was possible under the thrill of joy.

"I would like the place very much, sir. You are too kind."

"Oh dear, no," exclaimed the young lady. "I would offer you the place of President if it were in my gift, and so would papa. I am so glad you have accepted. Is your address still at the school-room? We must know to-night

where to send you notification if you are accepted, as yo certainly will be, for what papa says is law with them. They know he wouldn't recommend any one who was no qualified."

"I have given up the school," was the embarrassed reply. "But if you will be kind enough to give me your card, I will write an address where any communication will reach me."

Miss Deming handed him her card, and with his pencil he wrote the number in the block where the legal firm who had employed him had their office.

After a brief conversation the carriage rolled away and left Constant Earle with a heart happier than he had known it for many a day. Was "the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread"?

On the evening of that day a lady sat pensive in her drawing-room. She was robed in a cloud of white silk and illusion. Gems glistened in her hair, and an opera cloak, gloves, and fan were on the table beside her. She was listening for the sound of carriage-wheels. Her escort had not yet arrived. Her morning had been a scene of distress. The day had rolled up like a mist from the valley, and her evening was full of joy. Warwick had been saved, and by *him*. How strange the combination of events that had sent that man to her relief, when so many days and nights had been devoted to efforts and plans to aid him! He had anticipated her. He had been suffering. She had heard of the eagerness with which he had made way with Shorty's dinner. How cruelly Montrose Earle had deceived her! He had failed to send the promised check, else his brother would not have been wandering with a bundle in his hand, and greedily devouring her servant's dinner in her stables. Shorty had minutely related the whole occurrence, had read the stranger's name in the Bible, had photographed that whole scene for her, and, in the exultation of his grateful little heart, had clothed the savior of her favorite in the halo of a deity. He was the most beautiful and skilful being he had ever met. He was so quick and earnest and noble. Would that his mistress could have looked in when that scene was being enacted!

Now she must arouse herself in earnest to help him. Not a day must pass over her without a great and discreet effort

in his behalf. Poor fellow! how deep had been his draught of misery!

If one object engrossed the affections of May Delano, after her relatives and her friend, Miss Deming, it was Warwick. He had been a part of her father's family. He had come down to her in all his magnificent beauty and grace. He was associated with her happy past; he was the companion and pride of her orphan life. He returned her affection like a loyal subject. She really regarded his intelligence and affection for her as unprecedented in the annals of horse-flesh. He never failed her. She firmly believed he never would. Every new demand she made upon his speed or his endurance he fulfilled. Warwick honored all such drafts. He reverenced her, and would rub his nose against her petting arm as if he were human. And when the noble creature stretched himself in his death-agony she wept like a child, and, covering her face, hastened away. She could not see him die. Like a sudden gleam of sunshine the cripple had appeared before her with that thrilling word, "*Warwick.*" The baron of the turf was saved by a stranger, and that stranger the author of "Murmurs from the Deep Sea." How every page, every sentiment of that book, had become a part of herself! She had read and re-read it, until she was assured that in it the author's true self spoke. She felt that she knew him, had penetrated the secret motives and impulses of his soul. She longed to know him in society, in his true, native element, where his powers could enjoy more complete development. That beautiful face was to her indicative of every noble and generous thought that in that book leaped to life in a pure white flame. How divinely God had stamped on his exterior the true coinage of his secret heart! But her maiden modesty had held her back from proffering him that assistance which she had bestowed upon authors and artists before him. When she had gained the promise from Montrose Earle regarding the check, she instinctively shrank from approaching him herself. Her excuse for so doing would not be manifest. And now, while waiting for another to aid him, she had, unwittingly, allowed him to suffer. Montrose Earle had deceived her and sent his struggling brother no check. No diffidence, or fear of offending, should keep her away now from the savior of her favorite. He had given her Warwick's life. That was a great debt created. It must be cleared off. No interest

must accumulate. Why did she think so much of this man at all times? Was it that he was so intimately connected with the man who had likely caused that fearful death-cry in the adjoining house? But she had dreamed of him. He was ever haunting her night-visions. She loved to visit the oratory and study that ideal painting which so strongly resembled him. She seemed ever to see his eyes in the rich, blue eyes of her god-child. How was this child connected with him, with the murder, with the whole mystery? By the advice of her uncle, she had given Lord Carnochan all the facts in her possession regarding the affair. That nobleman was endeavoring to trace it out. Detectives, skilful and persevering, were upon the trail, and yet thus far she knew of nothing that had been unravelled that could fix the crime clearly upon the deep, astute, self-possessed Earle. She met him often in society; her uncle had formed his acquaintance and pronounced him an extremely interesting man. Where would it all end?

These thoughts again coursed through her brain as she sat so queenly in her evening dress, awaiting the arrival of the gentleman who was to accompany her to a social gathering of the *élite*. There would she meet her gay, beautiful friend, Miss Deming How profoundly interested was that lovely girl in Constant Earle! From the instant she had met him in the hospital she had commenced to rave about him. The interview she had with him in the presence of her father, regarding the rescue, had confirmed her fancy, and his name, and his book, and his face were her favorite topics of conversation. Would her friend eventually love him? Would Constant Earle be likely to return that regard? Was she perfectly willing that her friend should engross him? This question annoyed her a little, and yet she whispered to herself, "Poor, dear girl, she deserves to be happy; and I am her *true* friend."

Chapter XXXI.

Oh, how, or by what means, may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more near?
How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time, and thou art here?

F. A. Kemble.

Constant Earle had been installed nearly two weeks as Greek tutor at the university. He had a small, but comfortable room, no apprehension regarding his daily bread, a large table, a bed, and an arm-chair, pen, ink and paper. He felt like a king; happier than a king, for his burden was equal day by day. He knew exactly what was expected of him. His duties were defined, clear, uniform. This is the scholar's Elysium,—uniformity of routine, and a known regular hour for personal study. His evenings were his own. He was giving satisfaction in his conduct of the collegiate Greek exercises. He knew it. It is pleasant to be appreciated by our superiors; it gives us strength in the performance of duty. He knew that he must practise rigid economy, to avoid that hell of the upright and the sensitive, *debt*. His dress must be plain, his meals frugal, his light economized, his passion for purchasing books and a student's comforts in the line of stationery must be curbed. Extraordinary husbanding of his salary was demanded for the first few months. He was a debtor. Directly upon his accession to the tutorship, he had gone to the landlord and demanded the amount of balance due for the rent of his school-room after the sale of his effects. He had notified that surprised individual of his appointment at the university, and his purpose to pay him the balance due in a few weeks. He would not indulge in a single trifle until that debt was paid. The landlord intimated that his quondam tenant must have come of an honest stock. "My father was rigid in his integrity," was the proud response. He defended the parent who had beggared him.

It was now no difficult task to economize. He had passed through a school of discipline. He had acquired the lore of the garret. He had taken his diploma in misery and poverty. Some men emerge from the college of the cobweb and the rafter bitter and criminal. Others are purified by suffering.

Upon their diplomas are stamped "Strength, Sublimity." They emerge from the darkness, what they were not before, lords of themselves. Courage, perseverance, will, trust in God, belief in the inherent beauty of manly, honest effort, react upon the soul, and fortify it against the approaches of the foul fiend. If it was glorious, sublime, for Christ to suffer and die in the path of labor and honesty, it is noble for men to struggle on in his footsteps. If the great Exemplar arose triumphant over death, so will men who act from a supernatural motive. They will gain the uplifting hand of God who reach forth to it. There are heroes on the battle-field of poverty, who arise at length and triumph, devoid of trust in God. Such victors sometimes in their prosperity forget the tedious steps of their ascent, and scorn the struggling behind them. But a man who believes in God, and prays as he struggles, will in his triumph remember all on the lowest rounds of the ladder. The furnace through which he has passed will have purified him of false attributes, of the dross of selfishness, of egotism. He will live to elevate all, to depress none. There will run through all his appeals in behalf of struggling humanity a magnetic power. Men will believe him, listen to him, act at his suggestion, for the eternal fire of truth will flame forth with his words. Experience is a double-bladed sword. It prunes the vanities of the victim's heart, at the same moment that it cuts to the heart of his auditors.

Constant Earle was qualified now to influence men. His pen would be potent, for adversity had pointed it. Now he could speak to the heart. The author's true mission is to soften the hearts of the proud and the prosperous by images of moral beauty in distress; to stimulate the struggling by pointing to the triumphs of energy, ardor, and perseverance. He was ready now to robe his inspirations for the scrutiny of society. The aristocratic in him was shorn of its excrescences; the lineage of the soul claimed his attention. He was studying that book of heraldry that blazons the sons of God. The children of the King of kings and Lord of lords are high-born. Their pedigree is unimpeachable. There was no danger that he would advocate ultra or fanatical political reforms. The true Christian loves the prosperity and urges the true interest of the State. True religion breeds no fanaticism. It advocates wise, liberal governments administered by wise, competent men. It is fettered

by no immutable forms of civil organization. It widens or restricts the privileges of the masses, according to the necessities of the times. It seeks, like its Founder, to make all men happier, freer, better.

The calm, earnest, resolute Greek tutor was writing again. He had his moments of depression and inspiration. It is the experience of all men from the cradle to the grave. But he was more hopeful than in the den of poverty. The Lord had delivered him from the mouths of its lions. He was walking now beside the still waters; amid the green pastures he was being led. One serious regret was upon him. He had lost Nacoochee, The Evening Star. Where was the poor girl who had comforted him, awakened him from his lethargy, pointed upward when he fancied himself deserted? How purely and sweetly came to him the memory of The Evening Star! She was unfortunate, but so gentle to him when he needed soothing companionship, so strong in character and inspiration when he needed counsel. When he was wearied by the labors of the day, she had arisen upon the evening of his solitude, clear, glistening, inspiring. He had realized the inborn elegance and grace of the girl. Untouched by the hand of fire, she would have stolen the hearts of men less susceptible to elegance, and refinement, and intellect, than the poetic heart of Earle. His imagination had enabled him to fling over her misfortune the soft glamour of a dream. In opposition to the advice of his wiser sister, he would cultivate her society more than his duties as teacher required. "No man," she said, "should expose himself to conquest by a woman who would be constantly commented on by society. Now, her deformity is tolerable to you through pity, and through appreciation of her ability. By and by, when you meet equally gifted women in your own native position in society to which your talents will certainly restore you some day, women who are nearly perfect physically and hold your own rank, you will regret if you have encouraged the heart of this poor girl too much. Your conscience will reprove you for exciting anticipations which you cannot fulfil." He had laughed at such speculations regarding his intimacy with his scholar, and assured his sister that their hour of nightly intercourse was purely intellectual. He pitied the girl and would aid her in her pursuit of knowledge. He may or may not have known, from his experience in society, how beautiful and fascinating were his per-

son and address; how, above most men, he was likely to fascinate, unconsciously, the hearts of women.

But he had failed to follow the counsel of his sister, and now, when Nacoochee was apparently lost to him, he realized that he had himself been fascinated by the poor governess. He found himself longing for her society every evening at the accustomed hour. He could not take out the brass weight to pore over the hieroglyphics, without missing those eyes, that dark-robed nun, that figure which appeared at his door, in her street-wrappings, like a graceful female of Beira.

He would lay down his pen often in the evening and sit dreamily speculating about her. How strong was her regard for him? Would she care to see him again? Would she find any one to esteem her as highly as he had done? Would she find sympathy in the family where now she was likely installed as governess? He remembered every word of interest she had expressed in him. He could not question her sincerity. There was an air about her that suggested sincerity, whenever she took the trouble to appear interested in any one. The other night-scholars unquestionably fancied her cold and distant. She had sought no familiarity with them. To their advances she had returned only courtesy. He had observed that. He was a keen observer. He saw much that other people little dreamed of. He had passed through all the non-emotional schooling of New York city society, and was generally guarded. But he felt much, though he manifested little. There are gallants in the aristocratic circles of the metropolis who act the non-emotional admirably. They act the truth. There are others, whose hearts rise and fall like the ocean surges, who are equally non-demonstrative. Such was Constant Earle. He shrank from exposing his holiest impulses and feelings before stones.

He sat one evening in his room thinking of Nacoochee. He was endeavoring to analyze his feelings regarding that girl. When a man cannot pronounce decidedly upon the emotion he has for a woman, he had better avoid her, unless he is perfectly willing to follow her up to any legitimate consequence of intimacy. If he is willing to follow his heart into the obligations of friendship, or the meshes of love, whichever may result, he can proceed. If not, wisdom suggests his devoting his time to other subjects of thought. Avoid the fire if warmth is unnecessary. Trust to the dictate

of physical and mental health. He could see rising before him, dimly as yet, the gates which were to readmit him to society. He anticipated that the day was not far distant when his garments would improve in quality; when a portion of his evenings might be passed in the society of ladies. He remembered the flutter of silks, the perfume of flowers, the light laughter of society, the cadence of music, the white arms of belles, and the incense of flattery. He might find himself in the magic ring ere long, and something of the poetic awakened within him at the thought. Poetic natures revel in beauty, music, refined sounds, artistic scenes. There are strong men who care not for beauty, elegance, music. Against these the great dramatist has issued his warning: "Let no such man be trusted." If in the natural order of events the invitation which was lying upon his table at that moment, and for that evening, should lead to other invitations, and to his precipitation into the whirlpool of society, how long was the memory of Nacoochee likely to dwell with him? Was he willing to forget her? There would be an inconsistency, if ever he should meet her again, after his entrance into society, in maintaining an intimacy with her. She was only a governess. Madame Lookout and Miss Accidental would be sure to see them together. An Earle conversing intimately with a governess! If he was not injured by the report, the poor, earnest, noble governess would certainly be. The man who trusts his barque upon the uncertain waves of society must keep his sails trimmed for sudden gales of slander, reproach, defamation. It is not always easy to act wisely. Wisdom, in navigating the shoal waters of society, is not clearly laid down in the charts. The struggles between the natural impulses of the heart and the dictates of prudence are known only to those who feel. It is no effort to cut the acquaintance of a humble one, who has been kind, on the part of one of society's stone gizzards. But a generous heart aches if society finds fault, and circulates scandal for a word dropped in passing, or a hearty greeting of one who is beyond the pale of the *élite*. There is not the same difficulty in passing unnoticed a laborer or a governess. One has no rank, and expects nothing where recognition is likely to embarrass; the other may be, and often is, a lady who is entitled to recognition by all the accomplishments, education, and manners which make any one presentable; and yet she may be far outside of the pale,

and an accurate sense of propriety will sometimes find itself puzzled to steer without touching rocks.

If he should enter society and meet Nacoochee as a governess, how intimate should he be with her, if the circumstances should be such that intimacy might cause scandal or offence? Nature had made her a lady, and yet she was poor and unrecognized. She was refined, graceful, intelligent, beyond the mass of his female acquaintances. If she were in society, she would be pitied and styled brilliant. How much did he value her true merit, — herself?

His reverie was interrupted by a knock at the door and the announcement that the expressman had a package for him. He went down to the street door, and the messenger delivered a minute parcel to him. The charges had been paid in advance. It came from the city, and had been left at the express office. The messenger knew no more. Wondering who could have sent him such a trifling package, which was about the size of a wedding-cake box, he walked up again to his room, speculating upon who might have been married. Perhaps it was Miss Deming, to whose father he was indebted for his tutorship. He untied the string, removed the white wrapping paper, and discovered that it was indeed a wedding-cake box. He opened it. No fruit-cake was there. It was full of soft pink tissue paper. He removed that, and found a note beneath addressed to himself. He recognized the chirography. The note was from his quondam Spanish scholar. How had she found him out? A stranger would have fancied that the tutor opened and read the note eagerly. He was soon master of its contents.

"Mr. Earle, — I came to recite my last lesson, and, lo! you had gone. I was confident you would wait for me, and hence I took the liberty of delaying a little beyond my usual time. A matter of pressing necessity detained me. I found a stranger in possession of your room and left very much disappointed. You have ever exhibited so much patience with me in my Spanish exercises, and then, too, you have been so kind in directing my readings of ancient history, and affording me the benefit of your learned suggestions and criticisms, that I cannot forbear offering you a trifling testimonial of my regard at parting. Please accept this ring, and, if you will not wear it (as I notice that you never wear rings), keep it somewhere where you will chance to see it occasionally and

be reminded of 'Nacoochee' your pupil, and the respect she has for you.

"Do you wonder that I found you out? Nothing appears difficult when I recall your favorite proverb: '*Mas vale maña que fuerza: la paciencia y la reflexion hacen faciles muchas cosas, que parecian imposibles à primera vista.*' You were so anxious to collate everything relating to Solon, with reference to the interpretation of the hieroglyphics on the back of your mother's picture, that I send you, with my farewell, a fact which you did not appear to remember at our last interview. Solon *was* connected with the island of Salamis, if certain historians are worthy of credit. Diogenes Laertius and Aristotle both relate that his ashes were scattered about the island of Salamis according to his own directions. Some historians ridicule this as mere fable. Farewell, my kind instructor. May your dreams be realized! And when the earth shall yield up her dead may you meet in the better land the face of 'Nacoochee' no longer disfigured and covered. You have often expressed your apprehensions regarding my future. Fear not for me, kind friend. I have a strong will, and a brave heart, and shall no doubt live comfortably enough. *A quien madruga Dios le ayuda.* But I have reason to feel anxious on your account. You must not write so late at night. You will overtax your brain, and then you will be crippled for life perhaps. Pardon me for alluding to this subject again. I cannot but cherish a high regard for you and advise you as a friend. *Yo no dudo que V. sea mi amigo.* NACOOCHEE."

Gratified at this affectionate token of the poor girl's remembrance of him, he laid aside her note, and found the ring wrapped in tissue paper at the bottom of the box. What was his surprise to see that she had saved up enough of her earnings as teacher to purchase him a valuable amethyst seal ring! The stone was large and exquisitely beautiful in its color, and on it was engraved these words from the Koran, which he had exhibited to her one evening in a copy of that book he had borrowed: "*Dhouncon hadih alne-dhirat*" — "Behold the offering which I make to thee." According to the Mahometan tradition, when St. Anne was delivered of the Virgin Mary she presented her to the priests with these words. He had spoken of these matters in alluding to the remarkable admission of so eminent a sceptic

as Gibbon regarding the religious traditions in Palestine. "The Christians," said Gibbon, "point out by *undoubted* tradition the scene of every memorable event." Nacoochee had appeared to treasure every word that fell from Earle's lips. Her memory had surprised him often. Here was another manifestation of it.

He tried the ring upon his fingers until he found one that it would fit. It rested at length upon the third finger of his left hand. He would never part with that ring. It was the talisman of gratitude, more sacred to him than the tomb at Ecbatana where the Persian Jews crowd at the feast of Phurim to honor the noble Esther, who braved death to save her people. He was happier far to be thus remembered by this girl than he was willing even to admit to himself. He leaned back in his chair, and held the ringed finger up to the lamp-light. The flash of the precious stone was effective. He knew Miss Deming would notice it, and remark upon it when he should call on her again, which would be within the hour. The invitation on his table was to a small and select musical *soirée* at her residence. He studied the beauty and workmanship of the ring for a time, and then took up the note for a second reading. He started as he glanced at the heading. She had given him no address. Where should he find her? No doubt it was her maiden modesty that caused the omission. She would testify her gratitude to him, but not appear to invite him to her society. He admired this reserve. He could not but admit the delicacy of the affair. She had gone forth alone as a governess, had testified her gratitude, and then retired into silence and obscurity. But he was frantic now to see her. He had been dreaming of her. She had become, to a certain extent, a necessity to him. He was a caller upon no ladies but his sister and Miss Deming. He was fearfully excited when he discovered that he had not found Nacoochee after all. He was nervous, and paced up and down his room in distress. The whole brood of the Eumenides seemed to take possession of him. He walked rapidly, furiously, — eagerly whispering her name: "Nacoochee, dear, sweet, noble girl! where are you? Oh, for one minute's intercourse with you! I *must* see you. I *will* see you."

Finally he dropped into his chair, and wrote an advertisement for the "Personal" of a city paper, begging for the address of Nacoochee.

Chapter XXXII.

All tongues speak of him.
CORIOLANUS.

CONSTANT EARLE, as he was ushered into the drawing-rooms of Miss Deming, fancied a change must have occurred in the phraseology of society since he had been familiar with its haunts. He had been invited to a small and select musical *soirée*, and here were two great drawing-rooms already crowded with beautiful forms, gay faces, clouds of muslin, silks, laces, and all illumined by a hundred lights, and the repeated stroke of the street door-bell told of others still pouring in. A flush of excitement stole to his face. This was his native element. He pushed his way quietly through the throng towards the hostess. Beautiful eyes gazed, and then drooped their lashes as they met his in passing. They recognized instinctively a leader and a prince of elegant festivity. In another instant a bow of recognition reached him from a beautiful girl too closely hemmed in by the throng for him to approach her. She had been a belle of his circle and greeted him with an angel's smile. He had not been forgotten entirely; that was manifest. Another and another recognition followed as he moved slowly on, and then a murmur arose behind him. He saw at one side a sylph-like form in a white robe, a gossamer fabric like the mist which curls upward at the glance of the sun. She looked steadily at him a moment, and then spoke rapidly to her friend, tapping her first with her fan to make her turn about. Both ladies looked towards him. At that instant some gentleman behind him remarked, "Yes, that is the lion, — that is the author of Polymnia; a fine thing it is too. I know him very well, and will introduce you after a while." The blood mounted quickly to his cheek. A thrill of delight and surprise possessed him. What in the name of the marvellous could that mean? Could they mean him? Who knew that he was really the author of Polymnia? Any doubt that he was the occasion of the murmur which soon became general throughout the first saloon was dispelled by another remark close beside him from a perfect stranger.

"It's the greatest outrage I ever heard of. He is the au-

thor, and they robbed him of his manuscript. If there is no law for such theft, I don't see the use of having law to protect any kind of property. Read it? Of course I read it. Who hasn't read it? It's the best thing of the year."

Utterly astounded, the author pushed on into the second saloon, looking for the hostess. How had this transpired? Strangers were discussing him on every side. How could they know his personal appearance, much less know what was the secret of his sister, Nacoochee, the Hebrew, and the printer's wife alone, — all obscure and beyond the circle in which he was now moving? Women are terrible flatterers with the eye. Entire batteries of glances were fired at him as he made his way. Each woman seemed bent on receiving a passing glance from him.

"Yes! It has just transpired. It came out in the 'Evening Express.' Oh! Polymnia is too sweet for anything," exclaimed a maiden of sixteen, as she swept a rose-colored train out of his way, just in time to escape his foot, and gave him a flash of two eyes, piercing and black as the heart-thieves that twinkle beneath the gracefully folded mantilla of an Andalusian senora. She was walking with a gentleman, and seemed to care little if the author did overhear her.

"Constant Earle, *Διί φίλε*," exclaimed a voice near him. He turned at that familiar sound.

"Who calls by that term, applied only to kings and heroes? Why, Professor Bond, my dear old friend, how happy I am to see you! A familiar face from the old college is joy to me indeed."

"And are you not the favorite of Zeus? Every one is raving about you. Give me your hand, if you can do it without thrusting it through a cloud of lace or drapery. I beg your pardon, madam, I was trying to give my hand to one of my old pupils. That hair is beautiful as the hair of the Graces. Pardon my profane touch."

"One so gallant, professor, requires no pardon," was the response of the propitiated dame, as she put up her hand to her back hair and moved on.

"*Qu'elle est sotte de le croire!*" whispered a lady contemptously to her friend, who had likewise overheard the compliment.

At this instant a swell of harmony arose upon the confusion, which immediately was hushed. Voices were mute, silks

ceased their rustling, the charm of the melody was upon all It gathered power and sweetness, that solo voice, as it gushed forth in the inspiring theme, buoyed up by the mellow, solemn power of the parlor organ. It was adapted, to a single voice with choral responses, from the simple but sublime "Improperia" of Palestrina. She was uttering the mild reproaches of the Saviour's voice to his ungrateful people, and the slow yet bold, full yet soft responses of the amateur choir came back with sweet devotional melody. "Holy God, Mighty God, Immortal God," and ever and anon as her pure voice breathed its mild and reproachful sweetness over the hushed assembly, there was an involuntary straining forward to catch a glimpse of the solo singer hidden by the crowd. Again and again responded the melting modulation of the choir, until every heart was hushed in softened adoration before the presence of God. Oh, sweet, holy, precious, sacred music; link of the chain leading to our lost heirship of paradise; pledge that we have not lost utterly our hope of communing with angels; how gently she whispers us back to God, to a loving Saviour, to an immortality of bliss!

The music ceased, and Constant Earle pushed forward to salute the hostess. She was dressed in pink silk with a wreath of white lilies in her hair. Her white gloved hand held a magnificent bouquet. Her eyes glistened with delight as she saw him.

"I am *so* glad you have come. Did you hear the Improperia?"

"Yes, indeed! For a moment I fancied I was alone and that exquisite solo was my angel whispering me heavenward. Who is she?"

"Why, that is May Delano, my intimate friend. I must introduce you. Give me your arm."

He acquiesced at once, and conducted her to the group about the organ.

At last they met face to face, that graceful princess, the pride and envy of the *élite*, and the elegant, earnest scholar. She knew him at last. He was speaking to her in the subdued, polished witchery of tongue and eye for which he had been so renowned in his set. The original of the portrait was before her; his mysterious eye looked into her own respectfully, but with the instinctive consciousness that it had met a native of the poetic valley, the ideal Arcadia. She

had held many new idols of society in her spell for a moment, and then dismissed them from her thoughts as she turned at a word, or to accept an invitation to dance. She had known and fascinated men of genius without any fascination being excited in return. She had encountered now a pure, noble spirit, calm, self-reliant, powerful to withstand female fascination, and yet evidently so capable of appreciating true womanhood, true everything, that he was a conquest which every woman might suggest to her own heart. His polished tones wandered on through the mazes of a volatile conversation as if society were sunshine, and he intended to bask comfortably for a time, enjoy himself, and then return refreshed for duty. There was not the slightest manifestation that he was more impressed by her society than by the other gifted and agreeable girls who were presented to him. He manifested interest in many, devotion to none. She spoke to him of Polymnia and the excitement it had occasioned. He was gratified apparently, nothing more. She introduced subjects of conversation from several departments of knowledge, and upon some topics he was eloquent, appearing to have penetrated to an undercurrent of thought which underlies the ordinary comprehension of things. His mind was suggestive, not merely retentive. The two were soon parted by the requirements of the assembly and the musical part of the entertainment, in which she was a prominent actress. He listened to her music again and again, and was charmed, for she played and sang admirably. But there were many demands upon his attention. Lions are overwhelmed by introductions and conversational skirmishes.

But while his attention was engrossed by society, May Delano was watching him at every possible and natural opportunity. She discovered several positive attempts to engross and fascinate him. He managed to shake these off naturally, perhaps unconsciously. But she failed not to observe that the central point of interest for him fluctuated finally between her friend and herself. But that was susceptible of easy solution. Miss Deming had aided him to the tutorship, and Miss Delano was her intimate friend. But it was, nevertheless, a slight cause of female annoyance, and she experienced it, that he was the first man who had ever found any one equally attractive with herself when she had really exerted herself to please. His interest in her friend and in herself was apparently equally deep. These reflec

tions were indulged in during brief intervals of the social skirmishing, for a swarm of gallants watched Miss Delano's every movement, and some of them were extremely interesting men. But it is a peculiarity of belleship to leave the ninety and nine and look after the one, especially when that wandering one is beautiful and graceful as Apollo, and learned as Henry the "Beau Clerc."

But Miss Delano's powers of observation and criticism were speedily furnished with additional material. An ardent admirer of her talents and beauty entered the drawing-room. A flutter was perceptible among the beauties of the *soiree*. The new-comer was a well-known savant, and an elegant entertainer. His great ball recently given in an assembly-room was the sensation of the social world. Every woman *au courant* of entertainments in the metropolis had heard of Montrose Earle. Long and favorably known in society as a polished gentleman and erudite scholar, he had, since his accession to his father's wealth, and his return from abroad, gained notoriety by the magnificence of his hospitality and the splendor of his equipage. The beauty of his Arabian steeds was the admiration of every woman. They were conspicuous in the park and on the avenue. Extraordinary reports were in circulation regarding his dinners at Delmonico's. The company was select, the *entrees* unrivalled. The *bons mots* and the *bonnes bouches* were incomparable. His clarets and champagnes had been selected by his own hands from the best cellars of Europe. Ladies went into ecstasies over the pyramids of flowers which rendered these dinners fragrant wildernesses. The rumors of his summer retirement at "Silvicola" and his close devotion to abstruse studies in the vicinity of wild beasts and serpents, his entomological cabinets, rivalling the collections of Swammerdam, his servants from the Orient in their national costumes, his skill in several remarkable cases which had been submitted to his medical judgment, and the rare blending of courtesy and acquirements, which all acknowledged, rendered the name of this king of *literati* a wonder and a toast among the *élite*. The fact had transpired that "Silvicola" was barred against all women. Then why should he entertain ladies in the metropolis? He was a bachelor. Hence the mystery of his summer retreat was puzzling in the extreme. Several young ladies were understood to have injured their precious brains, at the instigation of their mammas.

in cramming them with scientific terms and data, to make themselves recipients of his condescension and favor. His scientific shoulders were said to carry a gold mine among other undeveloped acquisitions.

He came in quietly enough, pushing his short, compact figure slowly through the crowd, and speaking pleasantly to all acquaintances on his route to the hostess. He made brief work of his conversation with Miss Deming and her father, and soon anchored beside Miss Delano. She had anticipated this destination of his moving figure, and was speculating as to the effect upon him of the presence of his brother, and the discovery that he had suddenly become a lion, when she was startled by this remark addressed to herself. His tactics appeared to have been utterly changed.

"I am so glad to hear that my brother has won a great success. He has talents of a high order. I see by the paper to-night that his book, which was stolen from him, has brought out the highest eulogiums from the press. Do you know him, Miss Delano?"

"You never did me the honor to mention that you had a brother," was the response. She was amazed at the man's coolness, the ease with which he accommodated his dislikes to the judgment of popularity.

"Ah! perhaps not. Constant has received all my advances in such a strange spirit, that I have deemed it politic never to allude to our family matters. Do you recollect the young man who saved my life and your friend's? That was my brother. I told you of my intention to send him a check for ten thousand."

"You did, indeed, so promise."

"That promise was fulfilled, Miss Delano. But he returned the check, saying that he would have nothing to do with me. Still, I cannot but be interested in his success. You may, or may not, know that my father deemed it best to leave me his property. I do not know his motive. I can only imagine that he believed the interests of his children would be best promoted by leaving everything in my hands. If Constant will not receive property from me, what can I do?"

"I have been presented to your gifted brother, this evening. He impresses me as being of a very candid, generous nature. I have a suggestion to make to you, Mr. Earle, if you will not consider it impertinent."

"Speak on, Miss Delano; you are fully aware already, of my anxiety to win your favor. I am not an unreasonable man. What would you intimate to me in this regard?"

"Make one of those generous advances, which humanity, as well as religion, dictates. Go and speak to your brother before this assembly. Congratulate him on his book, and offer him your hand."

"With all my heart, and on the instant. You will witness my deference to your wishes;" and, to her amazement, he went directly to a knot of ladies collected about Constant, extended his hand, which was warmly received, and openly avowed his delight at the discovery that he was the author of "Polymnia," and had been vindicated ably in the evening paper. Miss Delano scarcely believed the evidence of her senses. Keenly watching him for so long a period, as one unnatural and suspicious, she experienced at this moment a revulsion of feeling. His act appeared to confirm his statement that he had not been remiss in the duties of a brother. How little did she comprehend, at that moment, the cunning and finesse of that cool, scheming intellect! He had heard of his brother's advancement to the Greek tutorship, and had in the pocket of his coat, at that moment, the evening paper which had startled the literary world by the announcement of the fraud practised upon the author. Instantly his change of tactics was determined upon. There was no longer hope of starving and humiliating his brother into a relinquishment of the brass weight. He must secure possession of it by cunning. He had no inherent hate of his brother. That sentiment, in all its bitterness, was reserved for his sister. It would not avail her now to exert her influence to secure him the possession of the mother's picture. She never could regain his favor. But in his secret heart he really admired the beauty and talents of his brother. They were a part of the sum total which makes up family pride. Montrose Earle possessed within himself the loftiest pride of birth and family. Constant had thwarted him in a matter which was of wonderful and engrossing importance. He craved the possession of that relic from Salamis as the traveller in the desert craves the water of the oasis. It had become a secret necessity to him. The yearning for it haunted his dreams. Its cabalistic symbolism was his morning thought and his evening passion. He fancied that he had discovered the intrinsic value of that mother's gift. Have it he would,

if death even stood in his way. He had been confident that toil, privation, suffering, would at length induce Constant to part with it for a handsome sum. But in the firmness of a sacred promise he had found his brother adamant. A relaxation of his sternness had resulted from his brother's heroic salvation of his life. He acted liberally and sent him a large check. The heroic in the toiling brother had not been tamed by poverty. The check came back. It was too like a bribe for saving human life. His family pride was again gratified; but his soul was furious that poverty could not soften the Earle resolution in this instance. He must patiently wait for suffering to produce its taming influence. But the bitterness of the trial seemed to have passed by. Constant was soaring on his own talents. He would not be put down. The relic from Salamis would never be wrung from him now. The hour for intrigue had arrived. That brass weight should be his at every hazard. He, too, possessed the Earle will, the indomitable purpose, the undying wrestling with obstacles. It cost him no effort then to approach his brother again. By that move he would please Miss Delano, — whom he hoped to subdue and win yet, — and, at the same time, advance to within striking distance of the mysterious talisman, the great ambition of his life. Constant Earle was amazed at his condescension, taken completely by surprise; but, as the Christian instinct was uppermost, he gave him his hand, cordially shook it, and listened kindly to him. While the two brothers remained in conversation, it transpired that Constant had not seen the evening paper which revealed the real author of "Polymnia." Montrose Earle at once took it from his coat-pocket and gave it to him. Human nature was not proof against the temptation to read it immediately. He managed to withdraw from the jam, and, making his way to the gentlemen's dressing-room, opened the paper and read the article eagerly. It was from a correspondent, who signed, at the foot of the communication, the mysterious letter *N*.

Chapter XXXIII.

"Say what is honor? 'Tis the fairest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done."

"THE following communication we have read carefully, and have examined the two books as suggested. In our opinion they must have been written by the same author. — EDITOR.

"POLYMNIA AGAIN. — No rumor is penned this time, but a hard, cruel fact. This eloquent appeal in behalf of virtue, honor, integrity, and learning, which has thrilled so many thousands of hearts, was deliberately stolen from the author, copied into a different handwriting, offered to a publishing-house, and instantly accepted, and given to the world as the work of another. Mr. Constant Earle, a son of the merchant prince whose name and virtues are still fresh in the memory of our leading citizens, was standing in a crowd before the publishing-house, endeavoring to gain admittance, to offer the manuscript of Polymnia, when the book was suddenly taken from him in the jam, and the thief escaped. The author appealed at once to a policeman for assistance in recovering his papers, but every effort proved unavailing. The rascal was too expert at his profession. A Hebrew, named Rupener, witnessed the act and cleared a way for the author to pursue the robber. But he had concealed the bundle, and could not be identified in the crowd. The publisher received a manuscript, in an entirely different handwriting, from a printer by no means renowned for his habits of sobriety and industry. This man receives the honor and profits accruing from the book, as the proof is not sufficient in a court of law to establish the fact that he is not the author. But there are inherent evidences which will satisfy a generous and literary public that Mr. Earle is the real author of Polymnia. About two years ago, Damandy, the well-known publisher, received from Mr. Earle a manuscript which was issued to the world under the title of 'Murmurs from the Deep Sea.' He there assumed the *nom de plume* of 'Iconoclast.' Let any careful critic compare the

style and imagery of that book, with the peculiar characters of Polymnia's pages, and he will arrive infallibly at the conclusion that the same pen wrote both books. N."

The music from the drawing-room came in rich, glorious choral bursts, calling him away from his reverie to enjoyment, society, flattery. He heeded it not. He was dreaming of The Evening Star, the noble girl who had rescued his name from oblivion, who had given him his real desert, in defiance of his self-renunciation. There was but one N. for him, —Nacoochee. He had told her all. In a moment of devotion to him and his interests, she had flung to the winds his name on the banner of fame. He could not deny his authorship. Polymnia was his child. It was the toil, the patience, the martyr-crown of poverty and pain. No matter what opposition might arise to his claim, she had spread it over the continent, and it was truth. What he never would have done for himself, Nacoochee did for him. How he blessed her sweet name as he stood there alone; how he longed to see her, that gifted, noble, bright-eyed, mutilated being, who esteemed him so highly, and yet evaded him now; who gave him the token ring of gratitude, and then was obscured! Would she answer his advertisement? How eagerly would he scan the "Personals" of every morning paper for her answer! Would she see it? Alas! the doubt was an agony. He turned slowly from his thoughts of her and re-entered the drawing-room. Who dreamed, in that brilliant assemblage which honored him, that his heart was absent with a nunlike, humble daughter of Eve, plainly dressed, and disfigured by fire? He looked in vain for a hand more graceful than hers, for a form more sylph-like, an eye more lustrous. And yet she was only a poor, humble, struggling, scarred governess, who could never enter that gay and brilliant throng. Was there ever a man courted, flattered, conscious of great personal beauty, and able by his attractions of intellectual power to win the fairest and loveliest queens of the social circle, so true to a memory of humble worth as to ignore the splendor of the high-born and powerful belle, and voluntarily return to the obscure idol? Such men are rare, and yet the fancies of some hearts are so strange, so absorbing, so madly bent on securing the love of the humble gem which a poetic nature has clothed with ideal attributes, that the poor seem to them radiant as the em

press, graceful as the fairy, pure as the angel, and desirable as the impossible ownership of the star. Love is a madness, or a holy gift of God. If a madness, let each one shun it; if a divine appointment, let the heart cling to that idol which alone can render it happy, peaceful, contented. This was the conviction of Constant Earle as he wandered through the assembly, recognizing every grace and beauty about him, and yet whispering to himself, "Nacoochee is not here." This was the poetic belief of May Delano as she stole glances at him, moving imperially on his way. The grip of the tyrant was upon that fair one, as she strove to appear unconcerned and gay as usual. She was hiding her infatuation. It is the instinct of the proud woman. The thoughts and the dreams of her life had centred at last. She had loved long and unconsciously. She had not interpreted her emotion aright. The magnetism of contact had alone divulged the fact that she loved. She realized it, and the proud heart retreated to cover. The stag-like poise of the head was more haughty, the laughter louder, the vivacity more general. She would bury that fearful emotion, that clinging to a magnificent revelation of manhood and power. No one knew it. She had succumbed to weakness, perhaps. Let the ease of her exterior conceal the acknowledgment from all but herself. He had made no advances. Dignity, modesty, pride, demanded her reticence, her show of unconsciousness. And her friend loved him. What wonder? Was he not noble, gifted, worthy of any woman's love? Her fortitude was soon tested. Constant Earle sought her again. With a smile he approached her, surrounded by her admirers. She admitted him to the charmed circle. She would treat all alike. This was her purpose when she saw him approach. "Why does he seek me again? I did not anticipate this. I must provoke the jealousy of no one about me." Vain thought, false consciousness of strength! Love is not sent to make us strong, but weak, not to teach us isolation, but to learn us to cling. She turned to him magnetically. She struggled at first, but the struggle was short. The power of his eye was upon her, the magic of his utterances held her spellbound. He gradually but surely took the leadership of conversation from the gentlemen around her. He engrossed her attention; the words of others soon lost their charm; she preferred to hear him talk. Neglected ones grew annoyed, weary, and one by one turned

away. At last she was alone with him, proud and brilliant in her manner, but slowly, surely, yielding to his fascinating tongue, his eloquent, magnetic eye, his earnestness, his power. She knew not that the hour was waxing late; that keen eyes were conscious of her absorption; that Miss Deming was looking at intervals sadly towards her. At last the confusion of the party breaking up reached her ears. She was amazed at her failure to retain her self-command, and resumed it again like an empress. She bowed kindly, but with dignity, away from him. A woman for whose love gifted ones had pleaded in vain loved without solicitation. She had really loved long. Constant Earle had won a heart which would sacrifice and suffer for him absolutely and forever. He passed the remaining minutes of his stay beside the young hostess and her father. But as Miss Delano swept away with her escort she glanced back towards the savior of Warwick. How strange that his eyes should be following her exit!

Montrose Earle advanced to his brother as he was about to leave the house.

"Constant, my carriage is here, and I want to take you home. I must see where you live. Come, no remonstrance."

The brothers rode away together for the first time since the death of their father. It was the first time Constant Earle had put his foot in a carriage since he had come to poverty. So many long and tedious months of garret and noisy school, hospital life and obscurity, and now leaning back in an elegant carriage whose comfortable cushions recalled the luxury of an Eastern sybarite!

"You have proved yourself, Constant, far superior to me. You have pardoned my insult to you in the cemetery by simple Christian forgiveness, and vindicated your prowess by saving my life. You have overwhelmed me with obligations which you will not allow me to clear off. I have been insane in my desire to own that picture. Let the past be forgotten. You have honored our family name; and I am truly grieved that my anxiety to gain that picture has made me forget my duties as a brother."

Constant Earle was deeply moved.

"Forget the past, Montrose. May God pardon me as truly and really as I have forgiven you! Nothing but the solemn promise given to my mother that I would not part with the weight during my life, prevents me giving it to you

to-night. I have no property but that relic of my mother, and I have made a will giving it to you at my death. That is all that honor will allow me to do. Let us speak no more of what is impossible and I hope will never be alluded to again."

"Only one question regarding it, Constant, and then I shall be forever silent. Why did mother charge you so solemnly never to part with it during life?"

"Montrose, I do not know. The Greek who gave it to her charged her to pass it down from generation to generation as an heir-loom, because his ancestor believed that the interpretation of its symbols would some day benefit science, would reveal some important knowledge of the ancients. These were mother's ideas regarding it so far as she ever revealed them."

They rode on quietly then. The further discussion of the weight was hushed by the promise of silence. But in the indomitable heart of Montrose Earle the purpose arose to gain possession of it that very night. He was moving nearer and nearer to it every revolution of the carriage-wheels. The calm, heroic heart beside him was incapable of appreciating the contemplated perfidy of the schemer. He could not comprehend a man, humiliating himself by avowing his cruelty, and appealing to the gentlest emotions of a brother's heart for pardon only that he might by cunning place his hand upon the antique from Salamis. Suspicion in a noble nature is a plant of long growth. The winds and the rains of many summers must prepare a generous heart to nourish suspicion of that which approaches under cover of a smile and a pleasant word.

They gained the lodgings of the Greek tutor, and Montrose Earle had craftily wormed from his brother, during that ride, every item of his hopes and expectations in life, the amount of his small salary, and the deficit due to his late landlord. The extraordinary fact that he was to receive no compensation for Polymnia was a pleasant guaranty of his future poverty. Constant Earle would not divulge to him that the prin-er was in his power. It was his sacrifice for God, and rested entirely within the area of secrets to be unshared. Montrose Earle could not have appreciated the Christian heroism of that night-struggle. He would have believed his brother a proper subject for a lunatic asylum in the pardon of the printer. It was true he had called the forgiveness, beside

his mother's grave, Christian. He had employed a word of cant to subserve his purpose. He really believed that suffering and poverty had made his brother an arrant coward. His awakening from this delusion was just ahead. There was another "wall of ice" than the Christian one of Tours, against which the Arab host dashed itself to pieces. It was Constant Earle defending a mother's memory and a sacred right.

As Montrose Earle, upon alighting, was about to turn from the carriage and follow his brother, he gave a low command in Arabic to the footman. He had forgotten, or was not aware, that Constant had learned the language of the nomads of the East in his travels. The younger brother deemed the command a singular one, but he said nothing. Why should Montrose direct the footman to follow them upstairs? He was a tall and athletic child of the desert, and came stealthily up the steps after them. He entered the hall with them, and, following them up the stairs, took his station just outside of the door of the tutor's room. There he remained, solitary and dark, when the two had passed into the room and closed the door behind them. The Greek tutor, supposing then that it was a custom to secure speedy answers to calls for services, made no comment upon the matter.

As they seated themselves and gradually warmed in intercourse and good feeling, the elder brother made himself master of the situation. The room was bare of carpet and the furniture plain in the extreme. The tutor was struggling to economize and free himself from debt. If the relic from Salamis was really kept in this room, as was highly probable, it could be found nowhere but in the table-drawer, or the drawer of a small pine wash-stand. There was no trunk or box that could contain clothes or valuables, unless, indeed, one might be concealed under the bed. An inquiry addressed to Constant elicited the reply that his few articles of linen were in the wash-stand drawer. His suit of clothes for daily use hung against the wall. The weight, no doubt, found a retreat in the drawer of the table. How could he naturally and properly look into that drawer? He drew his chair near to the table, and in true American fashion crossed his legs upon the top while detailing to Constant a purchase he had made of a city assembly-room, which he intended to furnish elegantly for private balls. He was determined to

engross a large share of public notoriety by the magnificence of his entertainments. He had received recently many boxes of statuary from abroad for which he had no suitable place in the metropolis, and which he desired to exhibit to the public before consigning them to the privacy of "Silvicola." He could not have selected a subject of conversation more certain to engross the attention and interest of his brother. Constant drew near also to the table, and entered at once into the discussion of his plans. The past seemed to be annihilated. Again was that intercourse established between the two which had so many pleasant memories associated with it. In the announcement of his plans for alterations in the assembly-room, he drew to himself a fragment of paper, and saying, "If I had a pencil I could explain to you better," he pulled open the table-drawer. The movement was not unnatural, and there, indeed, lay a fragment of lead pencil; and, O *Bona Fortuna!* beside it was the coveted brass weight. He pretended to see only the pencil, and, taking it out, sketched his plan of the alterations upon the fragment of paper. As he warmed with his subject, the pencil covered the paper with plans, and the fragment necessarily proved itself to be too small. "Can you not give me a larger scrap of paper? Anything will do. What is that brown wrapping-paper yonder?"

Constant walked away to the wrapping-paper which contained his foolscap paper for his new book. While his back was turned Montrose transferred the brass from the drawer to his coat-pocket. He had abundance of time for the theft, as the bundle of paper had to be untied and opened. It was a rapid transition from savant to thief. The mutilated records of the New York Historical Society are a memorial that the two characters are not antipodal. *Bona Fortuna* deserted the savant as rapidly as she had come to his assistance.

"By the way, I have slips of paper in my table-drawer which are just what you want, Montrose."

The tutor rapidly recrossed the room and looked into the drawer. "Where is my brass weight? That is strange!" He pulled the drawer entirely out in the search for it. "Gone! my mother's gift gone!"

He looked at his brother in surprise, not suspiciously. He was too noble himself to suspect Montrose. There he detected guilt. The shock of discovery had been too sud

den for the schemer. His face crimsoned with guilt. The cool hero of many lands flushed in the consciousness of theft. A change passed over that face handsome as Clovis. The small, delicate lips clinched firmly. He uttered no sound, but extended his hand for the mother's gift. It was terrible to see him. He was struggling heroically to curb every violent word, every unnecessary and stinging reproach The lips were rigid as ice, but the eyes were fire.

"My mother's gift, — at once; then leave this room."

The words came forth calmly enough. Their meaning was obvious: "Restore and leave before the bolt falls."

Montrose Earle sprang to his feet and drew a revolver. On the instant a blow sent the weapon flying through the air. The Idæan Hercules was not quicker in the Olympian games than Constant Earle aroused. A blow from the lion hunter was aimed at him. He caught it on his guard arm, and with the other arm circled the neck of the muscular savant and hurled him to the floor. The door flew open and an Arab darted to the rescue with a long knife glittering in the lamp-light. Constant shook off the grasp of his brother and sprang to his feet as the blade was aimed at his jugular. His hand received the blow of the knife, but the cowardly weapon glanced harmless from Nacoochee's gift, the amethyst ring. There was no time for Christian parley. Christian pluck in the defence of right was cornered. A cyclopean thrust from his iron arm dashed the astonished nomad crashing against the door. He whirled like the lightning and dealt a blow between the eyes of the savant advancing towards him. He measured his length upon the floor.

Chapter XXXIV.

That which in mean men we entitle patience
Is pale, cold cowardice in noble breasts.

KING RICHARD II.

BEFORE the stunned Arab could regain his feet he was caught by the neck and hair, dragged to the landing outside, and hurled headlong down the stairs. It made little difference where he lodged. He lay there bruised and un

conscious, with his knife in his hand. Such weapons were useless in Constant Earle's gymnasium. His blood was just getting up. He confronted the lion-hunter again. They grappled and both came to the floor, the Christian on top. He was too furious for words. Action is preferable. He held that strong man by the throat with one hand, rifling his pockets with the other. He shook off the grapple again and struggled up to his feet with the recovered brass weight. He pointed to the door.

"Go and pick up your dead and clear, or I'll bank you on top of him."

His brother darted at him again, and received for his pains a blow which brought him to his knees. He arose again and stood on the defensive, with his guard up, waiting for his opportunity to strike. A sharp, decisive round was fought; the savant was down, partially stunned, was caught around the neck, dragged to the landing and hurled on top of his servant. He deemed it time to retreat. He glanced up for an instant at the Greek tutor, standing on the landing calm and earnest for any fresh hostilities. The Christian had amazed him. He stood there sublimely alone, the εφεδρος of the Grecian Olympia waiting for a new antagonist. None came. Montrose Earle sullenly opened the street door and summoned the coachman to his assistance. The footman was borne away to the carriage, and the tutor closed the street door behind them. Was he a Christian?

He dropped into a chair and surveyed the battle-field. A revolver was the only trophy of the fight. That might become useful in the event of a renewal of hostilities. A man who would rob him of his mother's gift was equal to anything. A brother who could steal into his privacy with words of kindness, only to force him to yield up his honor as a custodian of the wishes of the dead, was to be avoided and guarded against. How tenacious was that affluent brother of his purpose! He had subjected himself to the penalty of robbery; he had made himself amenable to law. For what? A fragment of brass with a miniature upon it. Why did Montrose so ardently aspire to the ownership of that trifle? There must be some profound secret associated with it. It must have intrinsic, wonderful value. The elder brother was no fool. Constant took up the weight again. "Strange, mystic symbol of the past, speak!" The echo of his voice was the answer. He bent over it in study,

speculation, reverie. Again he took from his pocket the everlasting magnifying-glass. He narrowly eyed every line, every figure, traced in the brass. His theory had been formed regarding the Egyptians and Solon. Nacoochee's note had given an additional confirmation to one conjecture. Solon found sepulture on the island of Salamis. He and the Egyptian priests knew of the Western World; they knew of the lost nationalities, of the earlier lost nationalities of America. They knew of the mammoth, the alligator, the bison, the great cave of Kentucky. Why, upon this supposition, did they retain in brass the memory of that knowledge? Why clothe the items of that knowledge in symbols, known only to the initiated? What was the hidden wisdom at which the Greek lawgiver was pointing? The strange hieroglyphics running around the circumference of the brass only could determine. He must familiarize himself with every known key to hieroglyphical writing. That labor might prove to be valuable. This wreath of symbolical characters about the periphery should be the next object of his study. The hour was late. He took up the revolver and placed it with the brass weight in his table-drawer. He retired to his bed, after the concluding words of his prayer, "Forgive me, O God, for any unnecessary violence done in saving my life." He slept, and dreamed of The Evening Star, while the baffled savant plotted revenge.

On the evening of the following day a lady sat in the gray of the gloaming before a parlor-organ. She was shadowy in the gathering darkness, — a tall, but indistinct outline. At that solemn hour when the dying day bids us farewell forever, she was stealing from the organ the music which whispers of a better land. For every human being will come the last twilight. She thought of it then. The aged Christian for whom she was playing thought of it, as she sat so silently beside her, in her arm-chair, with emaciated, clasped hands, and thinking of her Saviour, who was so soon to receive her. How dearly both of them loved sacred music, the orphan heiress, and the aged mother of her friend! It seemed as if the sweet, solemn notes of the Anglican chants were never so soothing, so suggestive of purity, and truth, and heaven. At length the music died away, and all was still. To one a human idol had arisen to divert her thoughts, in part, from God. For the other was a struggle coming on. She must leave one idol behind her,

a pure, lovely daughter. She must leave her without a mother's guardian care. Her heart ached at the thought.

"Come here, May," she said, after a moment's silence. The voice was weak, but low and silvery still. The young lady drew near, and sat beside her, holding her thin, dying hand. She was rapidly failing. Any day might witness the spirit's flight beyond the stars.

"I am so anxious about my child. I must leave her. God wills it. May his holy will be done. I have great faith in you, dear May, in your religious convictions, and in your strength of character. Oh, promise the dying mother that you will befriend her child. She will listen to your counsels. She is too susceptible to new and strange impulses and influences. Oh, guard her for my sake! If she ever fancies any man who believes not in God, tell her of my dying words to you. The chances are that he will influence her to disbelief, to neglect of duty, to sin. You, dear May, would influence your husband towards the church, towards a religious life. I am confident of that. You lead, but she is led. Will you counsel her, for my sake, to set her heart only upon a man who loves God?"

"Always, my dear friend, always."

"And will you, when I am gone, take more interest in her welfare because she has no longer a mother?"

"Indeed, I will, Mrs. Deming. I do not know to what destiny in life God will call me. But, whatever it may be, she shall have the prayers and the counsels of a sister. Do not fear."

"It is well, May. The dying mother trusts you. Now tell me what you think about Mr. Earle. Is he worthy of my daughter's love? I can see clearly that she is fascinated by him. I am myself charmed by his apparent depth of feeling, human and spiritual. I do not care that he is poor and struggling. My child will have a competence, and a man is better who has to fight his own life-battle, if he is actuated by religious principle."

There was a silence before the response came. Finally she said, "I admire Mr. Earle as much as you. His character is in his features. Such men may fall under temptation. They rise more easily than others. But I speak to you in confidence, when I say that Mr. Constant Earle has, as yet, manifested no extraordinary interest in Carrie. His conduct has been exactly that of any gentleman who had re-

ceived kind offices and was grateful. There is something in his manner which suggests to me that his heart is wandering in ways that we are ignorant of. It is difficult to define our convictions, and the reasons for them, sometimes. When Mr. Earle loves a woman, there will be such intensity and absorption in his conduct that it will be manifest to others. I am confident that in the same room with him and his heart's mistress I could point her out. She was not present at Carrie's *soiree*. The woman may not exist who can charm him. But she was not here at the musical party. Do you believe I have that power of penetration?"

"You may have, May. I am concerned about your surmise. Would you be willing to speak to Carrie as you have to me?"

"No; I would not. It is not human nature to be pleased with such announcements from friends. A woman's own instinct must teach her when to be reserved. A woman in love has hope like every one else. The terrible awakening to her error must come properly from her own nature."

"You are right, May. It would never answer for any one to speak to her on this subject but her mother. There she comes now; that is her ring. Please pull that bell for lights, and then assist me into my room."

In a few minutes the two young ladies were alone together under the blaze of the chandelier. Miss Delano was revealed in a dove-colored poplin with scarlet trimmings. Her friend came in blooming from the fresh air of the street, and exclaimed: —

"I have another surprise for you. The colonel called me in to see your godchild and another present for her from that mysterious source. He told me to bring it here that you might see it, and here it is. It is beautiful. It came as mysteriously for Violet as the embroidery, and the colonel is very nervous about the matter. He fears that his daughter may be claimed some day out of his hands."

She opened the paper and shook out a small afghan, intended for a child's carriage. Several presents had been mysteriously left for little Violet, each one evidencing the skill and taste of some unknown mistress of the needle. The last gift was not behind its predecessors in beauty. In the corner of the present was a card, on which was written delicately in pencil, "For Violet, a sea-foam afghan." Miss Delano examined minutely the gift of the unknown. It was

knit in alternate stripes of sea-green and white. Upon the white stripes were worked branches of red coral. The fringe was white and red coral, and at the end of every stripe of sea-green was a tassel of white and green, tipped with large, glistening beads of white glass, to symbolize the sea-foam. Upon the central stripe of green was worked in white glass beads the name "Violet."

"It is beautiful indeed, Carrie. What is your idea of the source from which it came?"

"No doubt from the same hand that embroidered the white merino quilt. Everything indicates the taste and touch of a lady's hand. Poor creature! I suspect she is the mother. Who can she be? It is evident she does not intend to give up every connection with her child."

"Did I tell you, Carrie, about the nurse meeting a veiled lady in the park several times, who spoke to Violet?"

"No, indeed! What was she like?"

"The nurse thought her some fine lady; she walked elegantly, and her hand was very small. She was completely veiled, and would not raise it when she was talking. She appeared to take great interest in Violet, and made many inquiries about her and the colonel."

"It may have been the mother. Poor creature! We never know what is transpiring in this great city. But, May, did she talk well?"

"I am sure I can't tell. The nurse says so. You can estimate her standard of fine conversation as well as I can."

"Well, it's a beautiful piece of work, whoever did it. Come to tea; there's the bell."

Later in the evening the two friends sat together in the drawing-room alone. They were industriously engaged with their needles and tongues. They had discussed some score of acquaintances, some twoscore dress-patterns, and half a score of churchmen high and low, and had finally settled down to the great topic, Constant Earle, when they were startled by the street-bell. A call; some stray balls of worsted were called in from their wanderings, some scattered spools and needles were placed upon dress parade, and two dresses received a few adjusting flings. By the time a couple of glances into the long mirror had satisfied them that their hair was properly arranged, the caller was ushered in. It was Constant Earle. Two ladies looked smiling and unconcerned, and experienced a thrill at heart. Miss Dem-

ing shared her secret with her friend. Miss Delano shared her private wound with no one.

The hours sped rapidly. Serious conversation, music song, light laughter enlightened the evening, and Constant Earle arose higher and higher every hour in the estimation of his new friends. Notwithstanding his efforts to make himself generally agreeable, his eye wandered more frequently to the lithe princess-form of the orphan than to the fuller development of her purely blonde friend. There was a mysterious witchery in that dove-colored poplin, exhibiting the outlines of a Psyche form, and in that rich chestnut hair shimmering in the gas-light. There was a spell in those large, lustrous gray eyes, raising at intervals from their absorption in the mysteries of silk and worsted to sparkle at the merriment of a jest, or light with interest at an utterance winged with the ideal. Something in them spoke to the observer of a hidden nature, a recess far away from the frivolity of the hour, where noble and enduring qualities were lurking, where an arsenal of militant material was concealed for that hour when wealth might take to itself wings and friends withdraw themselves. The guest discovered that she allowed Miss Deming the lead in conversation, only coming up as the reserve force when the intellectual battle faltered. She dared not trust her eyes to study him, and when once or twice he caught that mysterious flash, he felt a thrill of magnetic fire course his veins. For an instant he ceased to remember The Evening Star.

In the course of a desultory conversation the afghan was mentioned. Then the mysterious finding of the infant and its subsequent history was detailed to him. He was informed of the whole affair, excepting only the murder-cry. The afghan was produced, as he expressed himself an admirer of female handicraft. The instant he saw it he grasped it, held it up to the light, read the writing in pencil, and turned deathly pale. He recovered himself. But Miss Delano marked the distress which crossed his features. He knew of it then. He was linked with the mystery. Her friend had been inspecting the symbol of sea-foam on the tassels. She had not observed the quick dart of agony. It was well. Miss Delano quickly put him at his ease again. He had experienced sudden agony. For that emotion his eyes were heralds. She rapidly and easily turned the conversation to general embroidery. But a damper had fallen upon the spir-

its of the author. He soon bowed himself out. The sympathizing eyes of the heiress followed him like ministering spirits. He was gone. And yet amid his distress he carried away abiding memories of the woman in dove-colored poplin. She had noticed his change of countenance, and relieved him by her address. And he knew it. "What a quick, magnetic nature!" he whispered to himself, "and so considerate!" He walked on like one mad. He left the grand avenue of fashion, crossed to a street-car and leaped upon the platform. The car seemed to move at a snail's pace. He was tortured by suspicion of evil; his blood coursed his veins like fire. Everything moved too slow for him. His heart had flown beyond blocks, and streets, and avenues, and still that tedious tinkling car-bell lingered behind. When would the passengers cease to enter and leave, detaining his agonized spirit in suspense? Hasten, hasten, hasten! A noble heart is in agony, and still you loiter. On, past the crossing streets, the lamps, the markets, and the shops, the car rolled along, and minutes seemed to contain the exhausting agony of hours. At length, ah! at length, suspense was approaching that goal where reality must open. He sprang from the car in full career, and ran up a side street. He flew along the pavements, turned into another street, hastened up a short flight of steps, and rang the bell nervously. The door was opened by a woman, lovely as a star. It was his sister, Louisa Earle. She clung to his neck. He held her back till the lamp from the street illumined her fair face. She wondered at his firm grip upon her shoulder.

"Why, brother, what is the matter? You are stern and white; speak to me."

He could not for an instant. He was cold and trembling. Then the words burst from him: —

"Tell me, in the presence of God and his pure angels, *Are you married?* Tell me. You *shall* speak now, — on the instant, or I put that door between us forever. Speak!"

She gazed upon him in his agony. A struggle convulsed her. She knew his meaning.

"Yes, dear brother, *I am married.*"

"Thank God! O adorable God, I thank thee! I thank thee, and bless thy holy name."

He strained her to his heart, pressed warm kisses on her forehead, murmuring, "Dear, dear sister, you have lifted a

mountain of agony from me, my poor, sweet, precious sister!"

"Come in, Constant, you are pale and trembling. I have broken a solemn promise for your sake. May God forgive me! But you are my only friend. Come in and speak to me."

"Where is he?" was the abrupt question as he seated himself. "My poor, beautiful sister! For an instant I wronged you. Where is your husband? Why don't he come to you? Why did you leave your child to the care of strangers? It has all come to me to-night. Listen to me. You left, or some one left, your child on the steps of the Rev. Thomas Delano's residence. You knew it. You have sent that child from time to time, gifts, presents. The last was an afghan, a sea-foam afghan. I recognized the coral branches you were working. I knew the handwriting you put upon the card. I hastened away to you like lightning. Now tell me all. Who is he? Where is he? What is his name? Tell me. I will aid you, stand by you. Speak to me."

"Constant, my husband is an English gentleman, noble, pure, generous, a member of our church. In a moment of ardent persuasion I married him secretly. The proof is in my room. You shall see it. He is of noble family, but an outcast, or rather at enmity with his kindred. He took my child away, telling me where he would leave it, that no knowledge of our marriage might transpire until his return. He would conciliate his family, and then return to me. He left that night with my child. He fulfilled his word about leaving her in safe hands where I could track her. He persuaded me it was for the best. He was to sail for England in the morning. Something has happened to him. My heart bleeds by day and by night for him. I love him better than life. O my brother, I would have told you long ago, but for my promise to him whom I adore. Forgive me and bless me, brother, once again."

He pressed her tenderly in his arms. "Dear image of my mother, I love you better than life. What is the name of your husband?"

"*Robert Melville.*"

Chapter XXXV.

"An eagle towering in his pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed."

The Delano carriage, glistening in the sunlight, was before the door. The coachman in his gray livery sat erect and dignified. Mike in his grandeur-dress was an autocrat. Not more rigid was the tall carriage whip beside him than his motionless figure. Brimful of drollery in the stable, he was a stern disciplinarian on duty. He had many temptations to unbend since "Shorty" had been promoted to a seat beside him. The cripple had exultantly donned the silver and gray livery after a proper probation, and when he had demonstrated his ability to mount the box unaided. He was a footman with one foot. The dark eyes of the boy watched every movement on the avenue with the persistency that had characterized him as a solicitor of alms. Since his promotion to a Sunday school and a carriage-box it had become necessary to curtail his expenditure of recognitions of the beggar fraternity. But from the corner of his eye an expressive wink informed his former comrades of the pavé that he was not proud, though exalted. But his sly comments on the avenue pedestrians found vent at favorable moments. Mike's eye twinkled at the boy's remarks, but it was ever under protest of his sense of propriety. Under the influence of the warm sunlight and the gay scene upon the avenue, the cripple found it difficult to retain the proper amount of serenity and silence.

"Mike, Mike, you're good *ton* this mornin'. That's what Miss Delano calls Lippincott's coachman. She says he's one of yer non-emotionals."

"Hould yer whist on duty, ye rascal!" was the response, as a smile curled the coachman's lips.

"She did say it, and she laughed too. She's sound, she is."

At this instant a young gentleman fresh from a tailoring bandbox strutted by. Every article of dress was new and orthodox in cut. His coat was black, but his nether limbs were forced into pants of questionable fashion. They were

cut in the requisite eel-skin tightness, for the suffocation of calf, but were of unusual color.

"Them purple pants is what Miss Delano calls super-gorgeous," exclaimed the cripple. "Mike, that feller's a rityelist in his legs. I seen that color up ter Saint Alban's."

"May the divil admire me if yer aint right this time. Houly Moses, what chicken ligs that chap travels on! Shurs that's the pinetintial color in me own church for Lent. Poor divil, his ligs are a-fasting theirselves to death. He's got Good Friday on his back, and Advint on his ligs."

"Look at his stove-pipe, Mike. It's big enough for his great-grandfather. Aint them yaller kids stunners? purple pants and yaller kids. *He* can't lead the German. No, sir. Aint them pants tight fitters? I'd like to see Warwick jounce them legs for a couple of miles. Wouldn't you?"

"Faith, and ye'll see them fellers a-ridin' a-horseback any day on the avinue, their ligs stickin' straight out, and a white-headed walkin'-stick across the saddle. Did ye niver take notice to 'em a-walkin' their horses slow, to save the seams of their pants from bustin? I seed one of 'em, whin his horse shied at a pile o' bricks and started to run. Bad luck to the fool, he tumbled off and turned up on his back, and then shouted out 'Murther!' The palace wer close by, whin they heerd the man cryin', and shure they rooshed to the place whare they thought the man dyin'. Divil a die was there. Miss Delano, she rode up on Warwick, and took a fit o' laughin', — for shure didn't she see the fool let go of his reins whin there was no occasion? Be still now, the mistress am a-comin."

He assumed the professional silence and solemnity, as the door of the mansion opened, and Miss Delano and her friend sallied forth like two harbingers of spring. The heiress was habited in a light-green silk, with mantle of the same. Her fair face was revealed beneath a white silk bonnet trimmed with apple-blossoms and bright-green leaves. The delicate green shade of her gloves harmonized with her dress, and the parasol which she spread to the warm sunbeams was a marvel of white lace. Her friend was radiant in a dress of lilac silk. Over her shoulders was gracefully adjusted a white grenadine shawl. Her lilac silk bonnet, adorned with white lilac clusters, matched the color of her gloves, and she shaded her blonde face with a white silk parasol. Pure and sweet as the breath of June, they floated away to the

carriage. The door of the vehicle closed with a snap, and the raven-colored steeds sped away with them. The two friends were out for that tedious duty which is known as re turning formal calls. But Miss Delano had a secret mission, which was to precede the great toil of the day, and which she informed her friend would demand her attention at her banker's office for a few moments. Along the avenue they hurried, turned at length into Broadway, and paused finally before the steps of a marble bank. Miss Delano entered alone, passed along the hall, turned from the banking-room on the left, into the president's room, which was vacant, and sent a messenger after that official. He soon appeared. A smiling sexagenarian, an affable old gentleman, and an intimate friend of her deceased father.

"Good-morning, my sweet child; you are the first spring bird that has fluttered into my sanctum. How are you, and what can I do for you to-day? Here, sit here. That is the chair of state."

Her mission was soon revealed. She desired him, under his own hand and seal, to enclose the sum of two thousand dollars for her, to a poor author who had been very unfortunate, and was struggling, after a new and sudden fall, with the heroism of a martyr to regain his lost ground. The commission had been too familiar with the old banker to excite much comment, and he took down the donee's name and address. The author was to receive the money in bank-notes, and have no clue given him by the banker's messenger of his benefactress. She then received a statement of her accounts from her banker, and bade him good-morning. She regained her carriage and rolled away towards the fashionable portion of the city.

The day which had opened so auspiciously in sunshine and warmth closed in a gloomy, misty drizzle of rain. The omnibuses destined for the "up-town" districts of the city were crowded to inconvenience by business men hastening homeward. The crowds of the great financial marts were thinning rapidly. Sounds were being hushed which all day had distracted the air. "Down-town" was rapidly growing dark and gloomy. The windows of the offices and business dens were darkening in the touch of the misty rain. Many offices were already deserted and closed for the day. Sullen gas-lights were burning in dark retreats; principals had left; their clerks and porters were closing up the unfinished rem

nants of the day's business. A gloomy night threatened to hold sway, and there was no cheery sound at the closing of work. The noises at length were nearly all hushed; the pall of the night fell darker, and the patter of the increasing rain grew more distinct and mournful upon the tin and iron roofs of the business houses; it rattled, gurgled down the tin escape-pipes, and spattered from swinging shutters against the window-glass, leaving there its tear-drops, motionless or streaming down the panes in darkening streaks. It was an hour for sadness and gloomy retrospect.

In a room attainable only by three flights of tedious stairs was a lawyer's office. The walls were covered with volumes of legal lore. Deserted tables were scattered about. One only was occupied. A clerk was writing still, but the attorneys had left for the night. When the darkness had rendered any further deciphering of the legal papers impossible, the solitary clerk laid aside his pen and looked through the dim panes at the iron shutters of a window in the adjacent building. It was a contracted view, a range for the eye of some dozen feet. That blank, white, painted wall of brick was relieved only by the black outlines of the iron shutters, closed and gloomy.

A reverie stole over the motionless scribe. When would the struggle of life be over? When would the sensitive heart — elevated by hope, dashed down to horror by the sudden despair, wandering under rose-wreaths, lost under horrid shades, aspiring, moaning, exulting, weeping, praying, murmuring, growing older, sterner, harder — be forever at rest? Why struggle? For what? A name? The splendor of empires covered with drifting sand was the mocking vision that answered. What was worth a heart's struggle? Any ambition of power or wealth? Any good of the earth's gift? He shook his head mournfully. The thousands struggle for what the one gains. When the indomitable had won, what had he in his grasp? Old age, exhausted vital powers, a broken constitution, the near prospect of death. All is unsatisfactory, all fading, all dying away. No adequate reward comes after mental toil. Labor dulls the agony of thought. It is an opiate; no more. Men aspire as others aspired before them, and like them weary and overtax the brain, grow prematurely old and die. Soon they are forgotten. Their books survive, but by and by they, too, become obsolete; they are laid aside. Men crave the novelty

of the hour. They will have something new. Thus effort is forgotten. A few win the immortal name. Only a few. But the firmest works of man gradually give way and fall into oblivion; the ivy nods from the mouldering wall; the shattered tower crumbles finally to ruin; the grass grows where the sandaled foot of the ancient prince trod his marble halls. The nearer view, the more recent memory teaches the certainty of oblivion's tread upon the ashes of human effort. In the homes of our grandfathers, those iron men who cultivated the brain and sought to perpetuate the beautiful, the serpent glides and the wild flower springs from the crevices of the hearthstone. Those pioneers who built so strongly their foundations, and employed far heavier material than ours, are buried, forgotten by the masses, remembered only by the tottering who shall themselves crumble and be forgotten ere long. They burned the midnight oil, cultivated the steady habit of toil, followed the wise maxim, and repeated the ancient saw. Where are their books? Who reads them now? We wander amid relics gathered from the past of our own dead. A feeling of terrible insecurity comes upon us. What will chance to be the few relics preserved of us? Will they be the accidental papers contributed to the literary magazine, our feeblest effort? May not our grand work, upon which we toiled so patiently in pain, be covered up and forgotten? Appreciation of literary effort is a fickle friend upon which to rely. The fool has gained a long memory. Many wise men are buried under Lethe's waters. Oh, is there no sure pledge of reward for human effort? Is nothing worth contending for? Is nothing durable?

How agonizing the thoughts of that solitary wretch as he paused in his toil to breathe! Everything had failed him. Everything had gone hard, very hard, with him. He was so lonely, deserted, fallen again so far. He had struggled sternly, piled the tedious brick upon brick, until after nearly two years of toil and privation he had raised a tower from the valley of obscurity, from whose summit he might gaze upon the distant sun, and hope once more. The giant fate hurled down the tower, but left him the empty bubble, a name. That bauble was a foundation-stone, a corner-stone saved. Upon that he would tediously build again, erect another tower to mount to the far-off Olympus. In the midst of depression and search for labor to earn his bread, gratitude had come to him and blessed him with a gift, — the posi

tion of the Greek tutor. He could earn his bread, and work for fame and competence. Alas! that heroic battle against his brother and his hired assassin, to save his mother's gift, had forfeited him the place for rest, for study. That revengeful will, that knew no obstacle to a stern purpose, had brought to bear the terrible engine of the moderns, *wealth*. What will not capital accomplish? Deliberately, craftily, he approached the retreat of his victim. The younger brother must vacate the tutorship. He employed a lawyer, clear-headed, cool, unscrupulous, untiring, to aid him. Through him he sounded every man, every trustee, every influence, that had power to make and unmake offices in the university. Some had friends who could influence them, whose suggesting word was law. Others were embarrassed for funds. They were tempted by bribes of money to vote for retrenchment in the expenditures and salaried offices of the university. Who would suspect that so wise a matter as retrenchment in critical times was the result of corruption? Montrose Earle distributed money with a liberal and judicious hand. Retrenchment was suggested, debated, carried, at length, and the Greek tutorship abolished. The labors of the aged Greek professor were increased. The tutor was advised of the change. In distress he appealed to Mr. Deming to save him. Alas! that noble friend had but a single vote. He promised to look again throughout the city for another place. How dreary and tedious is a search for salaried places in the metropolis! While the weary weeks went on and no success was gained, the student, sick at heart, found himself once more at the door of the legal firm. They had no work, no copying for him now. They kindly remembered his former faithful service as a copyist, and recommended him to attorneys in the upper story of their building. There he gained at length permission to sleep upon their floor at night and work for them by day. He might sweep their office, make their fires, and copy papers for them. They would pay him enough to buy him bread. He could, by incessant writing, save a few dollars every month for the future. For this feeble hope he blessed the name of God and struggled on. He was iron in his purpose, but midnight toil and anxiety had settled a worrying pain at the junction of the brain and spinal cord. One day a bitter mortification came to him. His personal dignity was outraged; his sense of honor shocked. The same moneyed power which stealthily

undermined him at the university worked secretly upon the city press. From time to time stinging articles were issued, charging that a worthless son of the deceased merchant prince, Earle, was seeking to steal from an honest, struggling, industrious printer, the honor of Polymnia. He felt the keenest stings of grief at this cruel charge, but manfully remained silent. Why refute that which he would not prosecute before the courts? Who would believe that an author had a right to that book which was selling by tens of thousands, when he forbore to claim that right in the courts? Silence, submission, obscurity, toil: these were the watchwords of the Spartan, the Christian, the man. There may be a profounder maxim than that which urges every legal claim before the courts. A man from the depths of toil and pain may wrench a thunderbolt which shall shiver all rival claims and place him above suspicion or reproach. The claim to Polymnia he had laid at the feet of the Great Judge. He could still labor and wait. He would never prosecute the man whom he had forgiven.

But his strength was failing him. The incessant day and night labor upon his nervous organization had left fatal marks. He was overtaxed again. Pain, incessant pain, centred in his brain. A fine, poetic organization may be capable of long and unremitting toil. But worry, anxiety, the apprehension of poverty, will effect more in undermining the health of such a man than years of mental labor. One hour of reflection upon the hardships and hopelessness of authorship will send that acute pain to the crown of the head, when a month of uniform mental labor will produce no such result. A writer gifted with imagination finds that gift entering into the detail of his daily life. It is as vivid and suggestive for him personally, as when it works upon the personages and scenes of his book. Conscious at length of the dangerous reaction upon himself of his imagination he struggles to employ it all upon his books. He shuns long reveries as deadly foes. He must not, will not, think outside of his manuscript. He clings to the pen and the paper day and night. He will not rest from fear that he shall worry about his future, his success, his bread. Thus he overworks himself and the inevitable disorder of the brain comes on.

To this unfortunate result Constant Earle was conscious that he was again approaching. He dared not toil so hard. He dared not pause to think. The reveries which came upon

him in the lawyer's office was not premeditated. It was an accidental release of the bird, thought. Darkness covered his paper. He could no longer write. He looked out through the rain-covered window, and forgot his resolution. He thought. The first mental question that suggested itself was, when will this life-struggle be over? Buried in the gathering gloom he pondered the matter long. The objects about the office gradually grew indistinct, and the drizzle of the rain outside grew louder. Finally he could see nothing but the faint whiteness of the wall through the window, framing the gloomy and closed shutters of iron. He seemed to sit alone in the deserted portion of a great city. Who cared for him? Who was interested in his fate? Should he fall from his chair at that moment lifeless, who would mourn when his body was found prostrate on the morrow? His sister. Yes! she never had deserted him. She would weep over his untimely end. In the midst of all her own mysterious agony, she would kiss the pale, cold lips of the dead brother and follow him to the grave. And would Nacoochee mourn that he was dead? She had not answered the advertisement. Poor girl! why judge her harshly? She had never seen it. How could she, absorbed in her duties, and toiling for her bread? He had expended every cent he could in advertising for her. She could not have seen any of his notices. He knew it. "She esteems me. She would not neglect to answer." The thought that she was lost, lost in that great city, maddened him. He laid his head upon the table and longed for her society. She could comfort him when he was so desolate and dark, so weary, and faint, and sick. Oh for one hour of her society! She was a friend worth possessing. Why had he not tarried one moment longer in his school-room on that fatal night? She had expected he would wait for her. She had been disappointed at the coolness of his going away without bidding her farewell. Hence she had testified her own regard and gratitude by sending the ring. But she would not court that society which he evidently wished no longer to give her. Why had she been so hasty in her conclusion? Why did she not wait and see him again? Poor and uninfluential as she was, he knew that he had lost a valuable friend, — a friend who had counselled him firmly, wisely, earnestly; a friend who would have given her address, had she deemed it of any interest to him. Such a girl would be an invaluable friend to a strug

gling man, a friend faithful *à l'outrance*. He drew the ring from the pocket of his coat. He had thrust it away there out of sight. How absurd would that valuable amethyst look upon the hand of a man sweeping out offices, making fires, carrying buckets of water, and scribbling all day long for his bread! The sense of propriety never deserted him. It was a part of himself. He could wear that ring no longer. But it was very precious to him. He could not detect its scintillant light in the gloom of the office, but he raised the stone to his lips, in silent adoration. He knew that he loved The Evening Star that was lost. How grand it is to love, idealizing a human soul clothed in the garb of the perishable! The heart becomes sublime through passion. It feels itself capable of gaining any summit, exhibiting any heroic sacrifice, for the sake of the idol. As he sat there in the darkness dreaming of her, he proposed to his soul new efforts that might some day elevate her. Was she not worthy a high position in life? Could she not grace by her intellect any circle of refinement? A thrill passed through him. Would it not be a noble life, toiling and soaring that a pure heart and a gifted intellect might be given the means to gain for herself the highest literary position a woman could occupy in America?

His reverie was abruptly broken by a knock upon the office door.

Chapter XXXVII.

Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
Within me, till there came upon my mind
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

SHELLEY.

THE messenger informed him a stranger had sent the package and there was no answer required. He bowed himself away in the darkness. Quickly the lamp-light illumined the office. Earle drew a chair to the table and broke open the large envelope. A note was uppermost, in a fine business chirography; the same hand had written "Constant

Earle, Esq.," on the envelope. What a startling missive! Could some one be mocking at his misery? He opened the bulky roll of paper in the envelope. Amazement! There was a huge mass of new, crisp bank-notes. He counted them. *Two thousand dollars of genuine United States money.* "Mine! a gift from an unknown friend! I am a prince. This is a royal treasury. I'll pay my landlord, advertise high and low for Nacoochee, and then, then I'll apply every day, every hour, to my new book until it is finished. Victory! I am saved. O God, I thank thee! It is from thy hand." He walked up and down the office in ecstasy and excitement. He doubted not the timely gift had come from some mercantile house who remembered his father's kindness to them, and had learned of his struggling condition. He was so overwhelmed with joy that he paced frantically up and down as if he had suddenly been presented with a great estate. As he grew calmer he sat down and penned advertisements for all the leading newspapers of the city. Now he would find The Evening Star. She must read some paper. He remembered that she was ever repeating to him news from the press. He recollected one or two of her favorite authorities, and addressed advertisements to them, and all the other leading papers. The secret title, "Nacoochee," would meet her eye somewhere in the great metropolis. How eagerly he longed to put eyes upon his Spanish scholar once more! When the articles for the press were finished and directed, he resolved to indulge himself in relaxation for the night. He was too excited to write. One hour of change of scene would qualify him for more intense application to his book on the ensuing evening. Where should he go? He speedily addressed another note to his sister, enclosing her two hundred dollars of the money. He would leave it at the General Post Office, on his way. It might be of infinite use to her in tracking out information of her lost husband. He had written letters to every probable source of knowledge, for her, in this behalf. Then after a brief reflection he resolved to call upon Miss Delano. She had invited him to call weeks ago. She was brilliant, friendly, and beautiful. He could pass an evening no more agreeably elsewhere. He had called recently on the Demings. Now he would seek the society of the elegant belle of the *élite*. How singular that he should hasten directly to the residence of the secret friend who had lightened his heart!

Carefully donning the new suit which had been his only extravagance during his brief occupation of the Greek tutorship, he placed the bank-notes in the breast-pocket of his coat, and locking the office door behind him went forth with his treasury into the storm. He had not realized the discomforts of the streets, as he listened to the pattering of the rain in his little office, but now at the foot of the three flights of steps he discovered that a heavy storm had set in for the night. He caught an omnibus just passing, and fortunately secured a seat. The last up-towners were homeward bound. The rain beat violently against the windows of the stage, but found no entrance, and his heart was full of joy. He had a pleasant word for the clerk beside him, and was as merry as if the trials and struggles of the past two years were but dreams. He realized that Miss Delano would appreciate his calling in such a storm, and that there was no doubt of finding her "at home" upon such a dismal evening. Other thoughts possessed him as he rolled along. He was about to enter an elegant mansion, into whose halls he had never penetrated. The Delanos had never been of the circle of society in which his happier days had been spent. He had known nothing of them in the great city, where elegant circles may adjoin each other and never chance to mingle. Another thought came in this connection. The mansion towards which he was moving adjoined an old family residence of his ancestors, all claim to which had passed from him by the mysterious will of his father. The brother who had sought to rob him was divided by a single wall from the beautiful girl upon whom he was about to call. Of all the valuable properties in the great city which had belonged to his father the younger son had received not one. He was an outcast from everything save only the family name. That name linked him with the suffering sister on earth, and the angel-mother in heaven. A strange emotion came over him as he remembered the face of his father. How kindly and generously had the deceased father responded to every pecuniary solicitation of the younger son! How gently had he admonished him that, no matter how great and reasonable his expectations might be, he should early in life accustom himself to habits of business and industry; should possess within himself the means of independence in every emergency! He dreamed not then that the kind old man meditated disinheriting him and

throwing him entirely upon his own resources. His sister, too, was neglected. Why this sudden revulsion of parental tenderness? How had the two forfeited the affection of the deceased Earle? The ever-recurring enigma received no satisfactory solution. Nothing was left the brother and sister but the stern battle of life. He felt equal to it in this hour of kindness, in the warmth and enthusiasm aroused by the liberality of the secret gift. He would, by the facilities for study and essential rest afforded by the timely present of the unknown donor, force his own way to respect and competence. He would secure a crown which no Earle had yet attained, — a crown of literary laurel.

As the dreamer, with happy heart and renewed resolution, approached the dwelling of Miss Delano, that fair girl was sitting in the drawing-room alone, busily plying her long needles and listening to the patter of the rain-drops upon the window-glass. She anticipated no friendly call upon so inauspicious a night. She was expecting any strange occurrence sooner than the appearance of that proud, beautiful form which had realized her ideal. He had charmed and fascinated her by his pen and voice; but she knew too well from her friend how suddenly his hopes had been wrecked, how sternly he had put his foot once more upon the lowest round of the ladder of life. She did not look for him. Miss Deming had informed her that he rarely called, and was no doubt vigorously devoting himself to the seclusion requisite to the production of another volume for the press. But she sat there alone, speculating upon the surprise which already he must have experienced by the reception of the secret *douceur*. A satisfaction which only a noble heart can experience possessed her when she imagined the relief, the joyous surprise, the exultation which must have thrilled him, long ere that hour of her reverie, when he opened the communication of her banker. "He will have one happy night at least. He will sleep sweetly and carelessly once more. Poor, noble, struggling, sensitive heart!"

She smiled to herself at the thought, "He will be happy," and then a shade of sadness crossed her fair face at the after reflection. "Some woman will be blest with the earnestness and passion of his heart, while I pursue my lonely pathway to the grave." She paused in her work to listen to the lonely sound of the pattering rain. She was a picture softly revealed in the rays of the shaded droplight. Her

dress was white Marseilles, high and close in the throat, and fitting accurately a form which was the envy of drawing-rooms. Her delicate wrists were revealed in close coat-sleeves of the Marseilles. A row of amethyst buttons secured her dress from the waist to the throat, where an amethyst brooch glistened with a central wreath of tiny diamonds. The sleeve-buttons and ear-rings of the same stone completed the set. Her fingers had been plying swiftly the needles through the soft meshes of Berlin wool, whose scarlet hue was destined to lend a ray of cheerfulness to the sick-room of the feeble Mrs. Deming. Now the hands ceased their volatile play as she listened to the voices of the storm. Some gallants of the metropolis would have given worlds to be the object of the solicitude and interest which that fair aristocrat was secretly cherishing at that moment of reverie. Her heart was in a lonely room, in the deserted haunts of business, far away from the luxury and comfort which were about her.

She resumed her work again, but soon dropped it into her lap to listen. A stage had paused before the house. The noisy vehicle rattled on its way up the avenue, and then a sharp ring came from the street door. No doubt some call of ecclesiastical business for her uncle, whose footfall she had heard at intervals pacing the room above. She listened to the sound of the servant passing through the hall and opening the door. She was thrilled by the male voice which inquired for herself. A flush stole to her cheek. "Calling upon me in such a storm, — how strange!" She braced herself for the interview, the meeting with one who had been civil and sympathetic only, and yet for whom she must cherish forever an adoration second only to her worship of God. Alone with *him!* Was it pain or pleasure that pressed so firmly on her heart and caused that suffocation? In another instant Constant Earle stood in the drawing-room, and a proud, beautiful woman was before him. He had been certain of an agreeable reception. She glanced at him as she cordially greeted him. His face wore that radiant light, that free, joyous, contagious hilarity which was his natural expression ere pain, anxiety, and loneliness had taken up their abode with him. Care had vanished; vivacity, mirth, inspiration, were the genii of the hour. With artistic eye he recognized her loveliness, the taste of her dress, the elegant *hauteur* which lingered about

her. As he studied her, he congratulated himself that he had yielded to the sudden impulse and sought once more the retreat of elegance. She was certainly more beautiful than he had ever seen her before. At his last interview she had yielded the precedence to her friend. Now he could learn more of herself, untrammelled by a distracting third party. The flush which had mounted to her cheek at the announcement of his arrival lingered yet, giving a dangerous fascination to her classical beauty. She caught at once the contagion of his light-heartedness, his enthusiasm, his *insouciant* mirth. It relieved her of the momentary embarrassment the consciousness of her secret attachment had caused her. She rallied him upon his intimacy with Miss Deming. The earnest, natural avowal of his regard for the genial qualities of that young lady's heart confirmed her statement to Mrs. Deming. He was a friend, but would never dream of being more.

"Perhaps, Mr. Earle, you are a member of the incorrigible club who have voted women non-essentials to men."

"On the contrary, I have a nature which demands more gentleness, more sympathy, more affection, than most men. I live in the ideal hope, which, after all, may be only a foolish delusion, that I shall be loved yet by a woman who knows no life, no hope, no conceivable joy, except in the intense devotion of herself to the dictates of her heart; who will love blindly, eagerly, madly, without reserve and without suspicion. I despise the love of modern society, which is narrowed, restrained, strangled by expediency, and annihilated by the false doctrine of the non-emotional. I cling to the glorious records of woman's intensity and constancy in the ancient poets; and I believe that I can love as unselfishly, as heroically, as noble men have loved in the past. I know that the mass of men and women are incapable of this ideal love. But I know, too, that it is a reality with some of both sexes, exalting their natures, burning the selfish out of them, making them purer, better, more heroic men and women. I know there are some natures who are capable of a more martyr-like devotion to their native land and its liberties than others. Without hope of reward they will struggle and suffer for their country, and never yield in the darkest hour of trial and dungeon torture. They live and die zealots for freedom. So are there women who will love with the constancy and burning ardor of the sun. God grant us

before I die, the love of such a woman for I sincerely believe I can appreciate it, and return it fourfold."

"You are an enthusiast, Mr. Earle. You are not like most men. Your conception of such a love alone entitles you to win it. But tell me, Do you believe that love can flourish alone, unencouraged? Let me state the strongest case. Can a man or woman, as your experience has gone, love and retain the intensity and constancy to one object as you have stated, when time has demonstrated that there has not been and never will be the slightest return? Will not the weary, hungry heart turn in time to some new object that will love and appreciate it?"

"*Never!* Mark you, I speak not of men and women as they ordinarily are constituted. I have stated my proposition only of the few. With them love cannot spring up except for persons who possess high and noble qualities. Their love is predicated upon excellence, not upon the illusion of a moment. That excellence once established, love results that storms cannot shake, contempt or neglect cannot quench, death cannot bury. It is a fire stolen from heaven. It exalts, purifies, ennobles the heart. An unworthy thought can never take root in it. One can take it fearlessly before the altar of God and ask him to consecrate it to his honor and glory. Nine-tenths of the world would mock at my words, would believe me a fool or a lunatic. They cannot appreciate, cannot comprehend, such a love no more than they can comprehend that clinging love for a country's liberty which survives when armies have been swept away, when dungeons are glutted, and resistance is deemed maniacal. They hope, they trust, they struggle, they cling, these wonderful few, when hope has gone down in blood. So is it with the gifted few who can really, truly, and spiritually love. I would not have any other love. And so rare is it that I scarcely hope for it. The love of God is sufficient for all men, but he does not forbid the craving for that human love which is a purifier of the heart and an exalter of human action."

She could not question his sincerity. The fire of the aspiration was in his eyes. In the heart of every true woman so strong is the necessity of being loved, that she cannot come in contact with such a being as Constant Earle without realizing that there are men born with ardent cravings and intensity like herself to be devotedly and spiritually loved

They are exceptional men, and it is worth the effort to win them. Most men weary of their conquests when beauty has faded and the grace of form is lost; but these true ideal lovers see poetry and loveliness during mortal life. But women recognize them, detect them, and fear them not, for to them woman is the highest type of loveliness, purity, inspiration, outside of the walls of the celestial city. There was an earnestness, a freedom of expression, a revelation of her inner nature, in the response of Miss Delano, which she seldom manifested in the presence of gentlemen.

"You amaze and delight me at the same instant. There is a divine influence in the conceptions of poetry which only the poetic can appreciate. Many may feel the human thrill at the words of song which recites noble actions, but a few penetrate to the inner sanctum of the poet's idea. There is an exaltation of sentiment, of pathos, of ideality, which the favored spirits alone attain. So in love. A woman may love forever without encouragement, without even contact. I cannot doubt the possibility of men so loving, when your countenance is radiant merely at the enunciation of the thought."

"Why, then, Miss Delano, do women allow themselves so readily to adopt the cant of fashionable life, about securing wealthy matches; why look so coldly upon the earnest, the struggling, the indigent? Men hear at one time or another their time-serving avowals, their purpose to secure wealthy partners, their selfish utterances, and, true and noble as they may chance to be, they become possessed of the idea that all women are only schemers. From that instant, woman falls in the scale. Where before she could have claimed honor which would never be taken away, an ideal reverence clothing her in a glamour of fascination which would follow her to the grave, she then becomes no more in a man's estimation than the slave-wife of the Indian. Why will women thus boldly, freely, utter selfishness which disillusions all generous natures on the instant?"

Miss Delano smiled as she responded, "Women are great fools generally; there is no doubt of that. I am afraid that the standard of manhood is depreciating also under the influence of wealth and luxury. The intricate connections of capital and the trades have proved themselves hostile to individuality. An old-fashioned burst of enthusiasm, a warm manifestation of friendship, the utterance even of a

noble thought, occasions a smile of incredulity. These appear to be suited only to the regions of mountains, the localities where settlements are few. And yet one fears to avow this truth almost. It is so apt to subject one to the charge of growing old to discover superiorities in anything the past has given birth to. But we shall drift into a current of genuine old fogyism if we continue in this strain. Let us change the subject. I recollect that you are an ardent friend of one of the muses at least. I have some new music; would you like to have me sing for you? You cannot expect me to produce the marvellous effects upon the stars, the sea, and the rivers, and Mount Helicon, that accompanied the efforts of the muses when they sang against the nine daughters of Pierus; still I will do my best for you."

"Nothing would give me more pleasure, Miss Delano, provided you give me a style of music which is well defined and articulated. I know how well you *can* sing. But Heaven save me from Miss Temple's Italian music at the *soirée!* Do you recollect that remarkable effort?"

"Yes, indeed. It reminded me of Domenico Capranica's answer when Nicholas V. asked him what he thought of his choir. He said it seemed to him 'like a sack full of young swine; for he heard a dreadful noise, but could distinguish nothing articulate.'"

"That is a fair and moderate description of Miss Temple and her coadjutors. But what are you going to sing for me, Miss Delano?"

"Selections from Allegri. I know what style of music you crave. I remember everything. You gave me your taste at the *soirée*. Seat yourself comfortably in that corner, out of the light. I can turn my own leaves. Shut up every sense save that of hearing. Turning my music will distract you. All authors are weary and need repose when they listen to music. No remonstrance. I order you into the corner. That is uncle's seat, and he knows all the requisites to effect in music."

He obeyed her directions, and was soon sitting alone and in silence, borne unresistingly along by the uniformly directed tide of the great composer's harmonies.

Chapter XXXVII. 8

Red leaves trailing,
Fall unfailing,
Dropping, sailing,
From the wood.

T. Buchanan Read.

It was a warm and beautiful day in October. The park of "Sublimity" was radiant in its mantle of scarlet and gold. Its giant maples, hard and soft, standing at long intervals in the great sweep of the English meadow grass were gorgeous enough in their autumnal costumes for a pageantry of monarchs, a congress of emperors. In the far distance were the dense masses of their retainers, the wild forest-trees of the plains and mountains, arrayed in garments of dark green, purple, and brown. The miniature lake with the serpentine stream entering and leaving it, glistening in the full effulgence of the sun, and the broad mass of scarlet leaves clinging to the front and gables of the antique mansion, heightened the effect of the scene. Far away, and high in air, like the cimeter-edged Al Sarat of the Mahometan paradise, was traced against the blue sky the fairy bridge spanning the mountain gorge. The solemn and bare mountain-tops in the far west looked down upon the gorgeous scene in sullen majesty, and the roar of the Sorrow Kil over the rocks of its hidden bed came indistinctly through the hushed and mellow atmosphere of the autumn.

So mild and gentle was the breath of the dying year, that even the invalid mother of Miss Deming could sit unharmed in her easy-chair upon the piazza of the country-house, and watch the glories of the park, and listen to the sounds of mirth which rang out upon the air from every side. Young ladies were urging their graceful steeds in races with gentlemen across the green sward, while others loitered under the maples in quiet and mysterious converse with gallants, who seemed to partake of the dreamy nature of the October air. Two graceful girls, with ringlets streaming on their shoulders, had rowed the scarlet-banded skiff into the centre of the lake, where they challenged their beaux upon the shore to wade after them and testify the sincerity of their gallantry. Mirth and light laughter and unrestrained festivity had so

cured possession of "Sublimity," and seemed determined to retain it.

Under one huge-spreading maple, flaming in its fiery mantle, was a rustic seat occupied by the mistress of "Sublimity." She was engaged in attentions to, and conversation with, two admirers: one a gentleman scarcely past the age of thirty, and the other an unbridled, chestnut-colored steed that had wandered up, in his meadow ramble, to her side, for a kind word and a caress. The heiress was guarded by two that occupied a large share of her heart sympathies: Constant Earle and Warwick, the horse and the amateur veterinary physician that had saved him. She had invited the Reverend Thomas Delano, one of her aunts, and several young ladies and gentlemen to share the hospitality of "Sublimity" for a few weeks of the autumn. The period of their stay had nearly passed, and all seemed determined to make the most of the fine weather which still remained to them before their flight to the city. The careless hilarity and freedom of the Roman Saturnalia reigned. The heiress had suggested to Miss Deming that the presence of the author of Polymnia would be an agreeable accession to the circle invited to the country home. That young lady had acquiesced instantly, and became the medium through whom Constant Earle received his invitation. She had not relinquished all hope of making a conquest in that quarter. The author was exceedingly courteous and friendly towards the daughter of his benefactor. She had not yet discovered that his intercourse transcended the significance of those adjectives. The idea never entered her head that Miss Delano's suggestion covered a secret yearning in her own behalf. The serene, royal manner of the mistress of "Sublimity" cloaked any manifestation of tenderness. She appeared to have acted only in the interest of her friend. Indeed, she could not be charged with having thrown any obstacle in the way of familiar intercourse between the author and the fair girl whose life he had saved. She never sought his attentions or engrossed his time when Miss Deming was near. But it was a satisfaction to be in the same house with him, to know that his poetic nature was appreciating to the utmost the beauty of her country home and the society of his peers. His exuberant manners, his courtly kindness, his avowed and pleasant leadership, made him *par excellence* the favorite of the gay circle. Several fair ones had looked into those

rich, blue eyes with interest, avowed openly to each other their convictions that he was "perfectly splendid," and secretly to themselves that it was a shame he would not marry. But he quietly managed to please them all, and pressed silently to his heart the letter and ring of Nacoochee, that strange hallucination of his dreaming soul, that lost, hidden, far-off Evening Star.

But the inevitable intimacy of persons beneath the same roof brought him sometimes into close familiarity with the proud, beautiful girl who loved him. He was the best horseman on the place. The heiress was not long in making this discovery. They had reined their horses to a stand-still more than once upon the fairy bridge, to wait for the cavalcade behind them. The farmer who was the owner of "Mad Bess" had privately stated his opinion to Miss Delano that "Mister Earle kin make better time out of that critter than any man that ever straddled her afore." A faint suspicion would occasionally steal across her, that perhaps Muslama, under his guidance, might have made better time in the race with Warwick. Unfortunately the Arabian was laboring under an unaccountable lameness during this visit, and the question could not at present be solved. If Warwick is ever beaten, she thought to herself, it would break the fall of my pride to know that the victorious rider was the author of Polymnia. Alas! he cares not to conquer me in anything. But there were moments when she realized that Constant Earle was fascinated, spellbound in her society. He was half conscious of the magnetism himself. She was congenial and sympathetic. At times he seemed to walk in dreams with her. She dwelt in the same heaven with his idealism. She valued and disliked as he did. Both advocates of church authority and conservatism in religion, they despised intolerance, and discovered friends of God in every clime. "I abhor the dogmatists," he said to her, one day, "with the intensity of Menoditus. There is but one God; let each man direct his thoughts to serve him, not to dissect and criticise his neighbor."

"You have been reading Robertson's sermons, Mr. Earle. Are you not afraid of your orthodoxy?"

"That will always assert itself, Miss Delano. In my experience the worst ills of life result from the failure to cultivate the Christian heart. The Christian head will not receive so rigid a scrutiny at the gates of Paradise by far"

Constant Earle could not fail, with his elegant tastes, to appreciate the fair mistress of "Sublimity." Every word, grace, and characteristic of a high-toned woman, was associated with that queenly girl. He found himself at times comparing her with the Spanish scholar. How could he, with the instincts of the aristocrat, balance in the same scales the mutilated plebeian, with her low associations, and the belle of wealth and fashion? He put this question to himself in the silence of his chamber, surrounded by every elegance of her refined hospitality. Above his dressing-table hung a portrait of May Delano, at that moment of interrogation. How exquisitely had the artist sketched that lithe, but rounded outline! How earnest, and yet suggestive of mirth, were the lustrous gray eyes! The lips might have tempted an anchorite. He recalled the illusions to which men had been subjected in the past. He remembered the fountain Clitorius, in Azania, whose waters gave a dislike for wine to those who drank them. He realized that May Delano was the wine and Nacoochee the water. But how pure, sweet, and refreshing was that water, that fountain which had burst forth beside him when he was faint and weary of life! But there is an insidious temptation in wine placed before us, sparkling, beautiful, inspiring in its influences. He was drinking of the wine; its wild, exhilarating thrill was stealing slowly over his senses. And yet amid the pauses of the Lethean draughts he caught glimpses of the far-off Evening Star, in its pure, cold, stately fascination.

On this lovely, dreamy morning of October, as he sat beside her under the maple, watching her graceful caress of Warwick, who wandered to and fro, and then returned to her at intervals, he realized that she, too, possessed his dreamy, poetic nature. Her eye was revelling in the mellow beauty of the landscape, and she spoke quietly of every mystic charm of the sunlight, flecking the grass through the scarlet leaves, the far-off haze which belted the mountains, and the Arcadian effect of the revellers, scattered away over the lawns. Her imagination sketched for him figures and palaces in the foamy fragments of cloud which slowly drifted across the blue sea of heaven. He had never known her before as a dreamer. She was manifesting, day by day, glimpses of that inner life that silently holds on its way, unseen and unknown by the mass of mortals hurrying in the pursuits of business. He was occupied in that most hazardous watch for a poetic nature

following the graceful arm of a lovely woman, weaving fabrics of dreamy conception from the beauties of nature. She looked at him now and then, and smiled at his merry comments at her air-castles. But at times a mystic softness and gentleness stole to her eyes; faint lines of sadness lingered about her mouth, which indicated that the life of an heiress is not wholly devoid of care. He silently wondered, but resolved at a favorable turn of the conversation to probe this mystery. At present he must transfer to the image-chamber of his brain the details of that lovely figure which was beside him.

He realized once again that taste and exquisite neatness which enhanced on every occasion the loveliness of her person. The poplin dress, which traced the outlines of her neck and bust, was of that autumnal hue which distinguishes the fallen beech-leaf. Its row of fastening buttons were crystal, cut in many angles, and the richest, purest shade of blue velvet circled her throat in a neck-ribbon. The glisten of her chestnut hair was shaded by a hat with a pheasant's wing.

At length he said, after a moment's silence, when both had turned to watch a spirited race of a lady and gentleman, superbly mounted upon two iron-gray geldings, and who had disappeared in the dense wood which covered Miss Delano's favorite road to the bridge: —

"One so capable of deriving pleasure from every cloud and tree and formation of nature should never know of sorrow and unrest and pain. And yet if I am not wholly inexpert in reading the human face, you have experienced at times the most persistent and keen anguish."

She turned to him in surprise, at the abruptness and truth of his surmise, but she said, quietly: —

"The human heart, Mr. Earle, is a mechanism so delicate and so fearfully susceptible to the influences of the passions, that it must suffer as well as enjoy. Suffering is a part of our forfeiture of Eden. We all must have times of depression and desolation. I was not aware, however, that my face was peculiarly adapted to reflect the secrets of my heart."

"Probably not. And yet you will be still more surprised if you will allow me to intimate what I have detected, or fancied I have detected, in the lines of your mouth."

"Speak on; avow the entire discovery," she replied with an incredulous smile. "I am so confident that my counte-

nance is not a window for my thoughts, that I fear not any conversation which may lead me to avow what are my thoughts. This would be the usual and necessary result of such a topic as you have introduced. I am upon my guard now, bear in mind, since you have confessed that you have been studying me. Pray tell me what my mouth has indicated."

"Intense sadness, which no human being can share, or rather will be allowed to share. You have met with a disappointment, which you will not divulge to your intimate friend, Miss Deming. You cling more closely to your uncle for companionship than you once did, and so distressed are you, at times, that you have been tempted to confide in him, for the mere sake of having some one to talk to. Human agony is relieved by confidence. You know that fact, and have debated in your own mind whether it were best to unbosom yourself to your relative. I do not mean to say that the lines of your mouth have revealed all this to me, but having observed you in the past, and at 'Sublimity,' I believe that you were far happier in New York than you have been since your arrival here. You had a certain amount of hope there, which has left you since you have been here. Of course I have no right to be an inquisitor, and to demand of you if this is not true. But I know it."

She retained her self-command, but not with her usual ease. He had pressed the spring of a wonderful truth. No doubt it was accidental, and he had only been a cunning master of conjecture.

"And do you claim to have supernatural power enough to specify what the cause of my secret grief may be?"

"Certainly not. No object has suggested itself to my mind, or come under my observation. But you have not the confidence in Miss Deming that you had once. No! I do not mean that. But I would say this. Delicacy prevents your making that friend a confidante in this matter. When she approaches you smile. Formerly you cared not to conceal any sadness from her. Wait, please don't interrupt me yet. These discoveries are not wonderful to close observers. I have noticed you particularly, because from the first I was interested in you. Men sometimes notice, far more keenly than you imagine, the slightest evidences of coolness or change between two ladies who are friends. Two women who are intimates have a peculiar intensity of regard

or each other, when everything is going on smoothly. When the slightest collision of interests, or the necessity of concealing a secret from the other, occurs, some stranger, some third party, detects a change in demeanor. I sometimes can do it. I have done it in this instance. I have seen you shake off sadness, that she might not detect it. Formerly I noticed on several occasions that you were depressed, and made no effort to conceal it from her. Therefore I reason that a barrier has arisen."

"You must have employed, Mr. Earle, in your draughts, the thalassegle of the Magi, to aid your vision. So wonderful an herbalist, so remarkable a pupil of Pythagoras and Democritus, must be able also to reveal to me the *cause* of this slight estrangement from my friend."

The ironical tone was a cloak to divert attention, to avoid the acknowledgment that he had penetrated a secret which she fancied hidden by the ordinary caution of her manner. It was rapidly becoming apparent that her companion was not only an author and a poetic dreamer, but an observer. She must be more thoroughly on her guard in his presence. Her pride revolted at the thought that he might have fathomed her secret attachment also. The old *hauteur* of her manner returned.

"The keenness of your satirical dart I acknowledge, and shall not resent it, for the simple reason that a response in the same spirit may lead to a quarrel and consequent estrangement. I value your regard too highly, Miss Delano, to forfeit it by an unkind reply, particularly when I am so soon to leave."

She was partially mollified by his non-combatism. He was truly soon to pass from her sight. This might be the last opportunity of familiar intercourse with one whom she loved with all the vehemence of a passionate nature. She had not the faintest belief that he would ever love her. But in her agony and desolation of heart she craved his friendly intercourse in the long winter before her. Unkind words now might rupture their intimacy in the future. A faint tremor was in her voice as she replied: —

"You cannot value my regard more highly, Mr. Earle, than I value yours. Suppose we allow this subject to drop. I am not always happy, but I have so much to be thankful for that it is wrong to complain. You, no doubt, have your secret griefs like every one else. We must remain friends,

and in order to preserve mutual regard we must never encroach upon unknown ground. I hope you will not forget to call upon me after our return to the city."

"I never make a call there that affords me one-half the pleasure that a call upon you does."

"You are too truthful, Mr. Earle, to flatter. This is an unexpected avowal, and, like all great pleasures that come to me, is utterly unforeseen."

Was he softening towards her at last? The veil was slightly lifted from her heart. A secret, perhaps an unconscious, preference for her society had been germinating in the soul of that man. She had won the hearts of men less susceptible. Had her sceptre departed from her? Could she not win the love of the only being she had ever cared for? Like the flash of the lightning a purpose came to her. While yet he was with her at "Sublimity," she would afford him an opportunity to know his own heart. If secret regard for her was lurking behind that affable, self-possessed manner of the author, jealousy would develop it. That terrible agony of love makes even the dumb speak. She had heard of that wonderful weapon in battles of the heart. She resolved to employ it, and that right speedily. Their *tête-à-tête* was interrupted at this juncture by the appearance of a lady and gentleman, who dashed rapidly up to the rustic seat, and there checked their horses. Nothing could have been more fortunate for Miss Delano's plan than the remark which fell from the lady's lips.

"O May! here is a rebel against your sovereignty. Colonel Lagrange says Warwick can be beaten, and his horse can do it. I wish you would race with him, just to take the conceit out of him. He fancies, because he has outrun my iron-gray, he is lord of the turf. Do give him a touch of Warwick's qualities."

"I only remarked, Miss Deming, that he might find his match, and my horse was as likely to be that match as any in the neighborhood."

"I have no objection to have a run with you, colonel," said the heiress, "provided you allow me to choose my own time."

"Certainly, Miss Delano; a lady can claim all such trifling matters as that. But I think you can make the race not only interesting, but absolutely thrilling, by attaching certain stimulants to the proposal."

"How is that, colonel?"

"Why, for instance, make your beautiful hand the prize, if you are defeated."

"Warwick would not suffer me to dispose of my hand in that way. But, for fear you may think I am boastful regarding my hunter, I will consider your proposal favorably, on condition, however, that any one, or all, of my guests, may be allowed to compete for the prize."

"All right, Miss Delano. 'Sublimity' will be in an uproar, I assure you."

"Allow poor Harry Lester to enter the lists," exclaimed Miss Deming. "It will be cruel to leave him out, and he so frantically enslaved by your charms."

"Very well, Carrie, I will prescribe no limits. Any gentleman that my friend, Mrs. Lagrange, will admit to the park, may have an opportunity to breathe the dust from Warwick's heels."

The laughter and merriment occasioned by the discussion of this wild proposal soon collected the revellers from every quarter of the park under the scarlet-robed maple. Before an hour the hastily proposed scheme was matured and the regulations of the contest accurately defined. Before forty-eight hours should elapse, the heiress was to run Warwick against all competitors; every gentleman to be masked, that no favoritism might be exhibited by the heiress. She knew the qualities of Constant Earle's horsemanship. "Sublimity" was, indeed, in an uproar.

Chapter XXXVIII.

"With a glancing eye and curving mane,
He neighs and champs on the bridle-rein;
One spring, and his saddled back I press,
And ours is a common happiness!
'Tis the rapture of motion! a hurrying cloud
When the loosened winds are breathing loud;
A shaft from the painted Indian's bow —
A bird — in the pride of speed we go."

Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
The melancholy mountain yawns; below
You hear, but see not, an impetuous torrent
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
Crosses the chasm.

SHELLEY.

THE sun arose gloriously upon a scene of havoc. The terrific gale of the past night had hurled to the earth by tens of thousands the scarlet and golden leaves. Some of the maples were entirely stripped of their autumnal garb, and the crisp, dancing leaves were fluttering away over the park avenue at every whisper of the wind. Some floated upon the bosom of the lake like miniature barks; others glided along with the current of the stream until they leaped headlong into the Sorrow Kil. There had been still more serious slaughter at the hands of the wild wind. Huge branches had been wrenched from the maple trunks and cast to the earth, and in the course of the morning rumors were brought to the inmates of "Sublimity" that several trees along the Sorrow Kil had been uprooted by the gale and hurled down into the bed of that stream. As the guests descended one by one into the breakfast-room, they had strange tales to relate of the sounds which had awakened them at midnight, of the booming back of window-shutters, the rattle of vines upon the panes, and the howls and shrieks of the wind raving away over the park.

But the glories of the sun-burst were enlivening the views from the windows, the fires blazed merrily in the grates, and every one was wild with excitement, for it was the day of the race. Every lady was already familiar with the details of the new riding-habit in which the heiress was to hazard her hand and stake her independence upon the speed

Warwick. No trifling amount of anxiety existed in female bosoms as to the particular gentlemen who would participate in the contest. Every contestant was, in the language of the turf, "kept dark." It had been decided that all the gentlemen at "Sublimity" should repair to the residence of Mrs. Lagrange, who had been selected by Miss Delano as judge of qualifications. There all who wished to compete against the heiress should be passed upon, masked, and sent on to the park gates with the passport signed by that lady. There was a nervous flutter in some female hearts. It was not impossible that some gallants who had whispered soft flatteries under the maples might take it into their heads to forget, and, under the stimulant of winning a great fortune, make their appearance secretly under mask and mounted. Mrs. Lagrange had *carte blanche* to admit any gentleman of her acquaintance who was in good standing in the circle of the *élite*. Who of Miss Delano's guests would compete? What outsiders from the surrounding country-seats would risk a dash on horseback for the hand of "the beautiful aristocrat"? These questions were the subject of anxiety and merriment at that large breakfast-party. The secret interrogatory of the beautiful hostess, who presided at that table, to her own heart was, "Will Constant Earle enter the race for my hand?" She was confident no other equestrian could "*snatch the blue ribbon*" from Warwick's bridle. She believed no courser of the surrounding country could bring even that gentleman squarely to her side without her secret connivance. Warwick should never cast aside his laurels save to secure her the love of the only being her heart had ever craved. She cast glances at him seated near her. That radiant, beautiful, manly face betrayed no secret purpose to contend. He was a schooled gallant of the festive circle. She caught, with the wonderful skill of womanhood, every word he uttered in the confusion and merriment of the table. His purpose could not be fathomed. He was as inscrutable as his fellows jesting with him. She could discover nothing. Her acumen elicited no more than what was universally known, the certainty that her guest, Mr. Lagrange, who had originated the challenge, would be one of her pursuers. All else was as far remote from certainty as the Sibylline oracles.

"What horse do *you* intend to ride, Mr. Earle?" was the

inquiry made by Miss Deming, who sat opposite to him at the table.

"I am undecided, Miss Deming. If I select Cyllarus or Xanthus, Mercury will feel slighted. On the other hand, if I give preference to either of his steeds, Phlogius or Harpagus, I shall have Juno at my hair."

"Pshaw!" was the annoyed response; "you are all wonderfully mysterious. But not one of you will come within a mile of Warwick. I know what the result of this race will be before it commences."

"Unquestionably you do, Miss Deming; but then you know you are the first spectator of a country race upon whom the mantle of Carmenta has fallen. But please don't predict aloud, for that will destroy all the sport."

"I am confident, Mr. Earle, that you won't participate in this race at all. Look, girls, how calm he is beside Mr. Inglis! See! Mr. Inglis is so excited he can't eat his breakfast. Poor man, he hopes to win by lightening his weight. I think, May, this matter of heavy or light weights should have been settled in the preliminaries. It's always a prescribed matter on the turf."

"Come, Mr. Earle," pleaded a fair, dark-eyed beauty beside him; "drop the mysterious and tell us who values our hostess highly enough to follow her to-day."

"Miss Olcott, that fact is as obscure as the secret of the 'Gulf Stream.' Some *savans* fancy it is an outlet of the Mediterranean, and derives its warmth from passing downward near the central fires of the earth, and then emerging somewhere in the American tropics."

"Fiddlesticks! you are all too provoking; none of you deserve to catch Miss Delano. But, nevertheless, I hope some one may. I want a wedding excitement. May, will you honor me by appointing me your second bridemaid?"

"Don't be concerned, girls," was the response of Miss Delano. "There will be no wedding. Warwick is too attached to me to allow any one to share my heart. But come, we have many things to attend to, and eleven o'clock is not far off."

The breakfast party was thus broken up. The mistress of "Sublimity" was cool and unconcerned apparently about the result. All knew her almost superstitious faith in the ever new and developing powers of her favorite.

Long before the appointed hour for the start ten gentle-

men, superbly mounted, and masked in gray dominos, reined their steeds into line within the park and near to the starting-post, the porter's lodge. Mr. Deming inspected every passport as it was presented at the gate, and admitted the bearer, but failed to recognize a single one of the strange group. A few of the country people, attracted by the sight of horsemen so singularly resembling a mounted brotherhood of monks, had gathered to the iron gate, and were quietly peering through into the park. The gentlemen guests, who had no intention of riding against the owner of Warwick, had returned from the residence of Mrs. Lagrange, and were collected about that lady in the porter's lodge, awaiting the start, after which they could enter the park and witness the race. The object of their concealment was that Miss Delano might have no clue to her pursuers. She was expected to start a few paces before the line of horsemen at the gate, follow the line of the park avenue past her residence until she entered the wood. Then her course lay through the forest, along her favorite ride, up to the distant bridge spanning the cliffs, then down the opposite side of the mountain to the extreme limit of her estate beyond the Sorrow Kil. The distance was more than four miles. The successful rider was expected to snatch from the neck of Warwick, as he passed, a long blue ribbon which extended from the bit to the saddle, and which was to be the trophy and criterion of his victory.

The hour of eleven was close at hand when a bevy of young ladies emerged from the mansion and paused a moment to receive the congratulations of the Reverend Thomas Delano, Mrs. Deming, and Miss Delano's relatives, upon their elegant appearance in their riding habits. The group of stationary spectators upon the piazza were in a thrill of excitement at the opening of the contest. The young ladies who were to be Miss Delano's escort passed then down the walk to the mounting-block, and, securing firm seats in their saddles, arranged themselves on either side and awaited the coming of Miss Delano. Warwick was led up to the block by the coachman, who was fairly trembling with nervousness. The gallant hunter, with his neck proudly arched, curvetted up to his place, as conscious apparently as his human admirers of what was expected of him. Mike had groomed him within an inch of his life. His dark-chestnut coat glistened in the sunlight and the

long blue ribbon fluttered along his neck in the light breath of the wind. He looked *empire*. His impatient spirit was not long delayed. His mistress appeared at the door, moved gayly down the lawn with her riding-habit gathered up in her left hand, and an emerald-headed riding-whip in her right. She knew the oriental veneration for that exquisite gem, and she remembered its reputed virtue when she selected it from the dozen riding-whips that had been presented to her. It imparts courage to the wearer. She little dreamed how soon that quality would be demanded from her *répertoire* of heroisms. Her riding-dress was a royal purple; a velvet cap of the same hue encircled by a white ostrich plume surmounted her patrician head. Her cheek was rose-tinged in the fresh, pure atmosphere of the October morning, and as she mounted and rode away at the head of her escort three wild cheers of admiration burst from the ten esquestrians who were to contend for the small, slender hand nestling in her buckskin gauntlet.

She had fancied some supernatural instinct would reveal to her the idol of her dreams. But as she bounded up to the silent gray line of competitors she discovered that she could not recognize one familiar figure. There was only one rider who could not be Constant Earle. He was manifestly too short. The other nine were all apparently of the same height. She paused before them and carefully scanned every man. Every right hand rose in a salute, and she touched the emerald handle of her whip to her brow. How should she distinguish the form of the author of Polymnia? She acknowledged to herself the impossibility of that discovery. "Then I must beat them all," she whispered to herself. She turned another glance at the shortest of the group. He was superbly mounted, and his coal-black steed looked formidable. Strange that the shortest man should have selected a courser, evidently a thorough-bred, but lower than the horses of his companions. This graceful beast was fourteen and a half hands high, dark as the starless night, and of a mystical beauty seldom witnessed save in the land of dreams. It was a pure blood of that wonderful breed known as the Kochlani, whose genealogy, it is claimed, can be traced two thousand years. There was an unaccountable fascination in this exquisite brute, which she instantly entitled "Night." With imperturbable silence both horse and rider fixed their mysterious eyes on the rider of Warwick. A sensation of uneasiness crept up

on her as she gazed; but the restless movements of Warwick engaged her attention. There should be no cause of anxiety, she reflected, because the horse is strange. She gave one further, searching glance at the mysterious "Night" and his rider, and then waved her hand to her escort. They immediately bounded away from her, and she was left alone. Mr. Deming approached her then for any further direction or suggestion. She had none. She recollected, however, a remark upon the conditions of the race which had been made at the house. She motioned him back to her and gave him a communication for the silent equestrians behind her "Tell them that I ride this race to the death; no accidents or obstacles shall deter me from giving my hand to any gentleman who fairly seizes the blue ribbon between this point and the reaching-post."

This communication was received with applause. Mr. Deming then assumed a central point in the park, and waved his handkerchief. They were off, Warwick covering distance finely in his eagerness, and the pursuers for a few seconds almost abreast of each other. The hunter appeared to realize the emergency. He stretched forward his elegant head and sped like the wind. Quicker, freer, wilder, came his inspiration; faster, faster, faster, his hoofs spurned the track. The spectators on the piazza breathed freer, exultantly. Warwick had never manifested such supremacy. The secret of his ever-increasing speed no man at "Sublimity" knew. It was the patrician blood and fire in his veins from his remote ancestor, Lindsey's Arabian, that wonderful sire of the fleet steeds of Virginia. His rider had gradually learned from experience that he had never really been put to his speed. His stride was terrific. As he passed near the mansion the guests cheered him. The noble creature fired at the sound and responded by a spasmodic vault ahead. The long white plume of the rider whistled in the wind of his flight. Her eye gleamed in the consciousness of new power. She sat immovable as an Amazon above the stride of a Flying Childers. She was leaving everything behind her save one. The pride of the desert alone held his own. The dark, magnificent, mysterious "Night" clung to her like an edict of destiny; smooth and clean as an arrow's flight he glided after her, his light hoofs daintily skimming the earth. He gained nothing, lost nothing; and the interest soon centred upon the two. At length they reached

the wood, and disappeared under its shadows. "Night" was shortening the distance between the two when they vanished.

The mounted escort dashed across the park to the brief opening in the trees which would reveal the foremost two again as they passed. All was silence. The autumnal leaves fluttered in the light wind, and then hushed themselves to sleep. All eyes were bent eagerly upon the narrow gleam of the sunlight through the forest opening. They came not. Expectation was too eager for a just measurement of distance. There must be patience. Another instant and Warwick seemed to clear the open space at a single bound and vanished. Where was the dark pursuer? At length he, too, swept by. The hunter was leaving him. Glory for Warwick's friends! The ladies urged their horses away over the park. Away they swept, a joyous cavalcade, towards the narrow Kil, upon whose banks they might see far away in air the racers cross the fairy bridge. Every woman's heart was beating for Warwick. The gentlemen at the porter's lodge streamed away over the park, hastening to the banks of the Kil, and looking away westward and upward. The bridge was silent and like a rope from cliff to cliff. The bald top of the fractured mountain was deserted. The racers were deep in the forest, urging their steeds like madmen. Vain struggles. The baron leads. He has awakened at last to the knowledge of his own unequalled power. He leaves everything farther and farther behind. At last he appeared from the belt of forest vaulting upward to the bridge. The park resounded with the wild cheers of exultation. "Night" emerged from the wood, and fearfully behind. The dark steed had exerted his best and most wonderful powers, but Warwick was leaving even the desert courser behind him. Vain hope now of success; for the hunter's acknowledged power had ever been in his supremacy to bring him out victor in a brush, at the run home. Not so decided the indomitable will that guided "Night." Calmly and hopefully he flew along, trusting in the marvellous endurance of the Kochlani blood. He craved the hand of that lovely girl before him with a yearning which no obstinacy could discourage, and no coolness freeze. What was his amazement to see Warwick pause suddenly at the edge of the bridge, rear, and plunge backward! He urged "Night" forward, and Warwick still refused to cross

He shouted then as he gained ground, "Beautiful lady, you are mine; remember your promise."

May Delano turned at that voice and looked backward. A spasm passed over her. She recognized that terrible voice which had her secret aversion. She exclaimed earnestly, "Never! never! I'll die first. For God's sake, Warwick, save me!" She was a patrician, and her word was sacred as an altar. The glorious creature arched his neck proudly at her call. Cautiously he moved forward at her encouraging touch upon his neck, and passed slowly upon the bridge. Merciful heaven, what a bridge! The midnight gale had swept away planks, timber, everything save only a single stick of pine, which reached from cliff to cliff. Upon this firm and steady timber Warwick was balancing himself and rider, who was sitting with closed eyes and features livid as a corpse. Surely and cautiously the noble beast made his way above a fearful death of rocks and roaring surf. The wind of the mountain gorge gushed up from the hidden depth, and a dizzy suggestion was in the silent motions of the hunter's limbs beneath her. Balanced between the far-off earth and sky, she murmured the name of God. Every unconfessed and hidden sin of thought and act was manifest. She had tempted God to save her honor, her word which was spotless and true as a star. The roar of the torrent beneath her was heard, and the jagged rocks were uplifting their fatal fingers to mangle her. Unrecognized in her crushed and defaced humanity she would float away in blood-flecked surges below. Hush! the hoof of her faithful Warwick slips upon the timber. A gasp came over her; she was falling. The impotent arms of space are supporting her. A shivering thrill has passed her, and all is over. Hark! a strange and novel sound beats upon the tympanum of her ear. The fall of horse's hoofs sound no longer upon wood, but rock. She is saved! The glorious feet of her guardian have touched the opposite cliff. Another step, then a wild bound of joy upon the solid rock. The beast uttered a neigh of joy, and she opened her eyes upon life once more. With trembling limbs she sprang to the earth and kneeled to God. Then, uprising pale and eager, she clasped the mane of Warwick and kissed him, sobbing in gratitude upon his neck.

"O you wild Arab!"—she called across the gorge to

the horror-stricken master of "Silvicola," — "you don't begin to know my Warwick yet."

"Are you mad, Miss Delano?"

"Truly, Mr. Earle, I believe that must be your own peculiar emotion under the circumstances. It occurs to me that if ever a contestant was *distanced* it is yourself. How far behind will your black beauty be when I win the reaching-post?"

"My emotions are far different, Miss Delano, than you imagine. They are feelings of intense sorrow that I have lost your hand."

"Ha! ha! Mr. Earle. I apprehend they are like the Cnidian onions of Theophrastus, mild, occasioning no tears. Ah! here come the rest of the gay cavalcade. Gentlemen, I greet you. How lovely a place for a *tête-à-tête! Rien ne rend la vie si douce que la société et le commerce de nos amis.*"

With this mocking farewell, she led Warwick up to a ledge of rocks, mounted to his back, waved her riding-whip towards the amazed group, and slowly made her way down the declivity. Some of the horsemen unfamiliar with the gorge dismounted and approached the fragment of the wrecked bridge. They gazed downward into the abyss with a shudder. The very idea of that passage to the opposite cliff, even on foot, was a horror. They had all removed their dominos at the first suggestion of a barrier to the race. One glance revealed to the proud, fearless girl, that Constant Earle was not among the contestants for her hand. She rode away with her accustomed *hauteur*, but her heart was full of anguish. Love has many devices. *Her* artifice failed to secure the success which crowned the stratagem of the quince flung at the feet of Cydippe.

Chapter XXXIX.

The sandal tree perfumes, when riven,
The axe that laid it low;
Let man, who hopes to be forgiven,
Forgive and bless his foe.

SADI.

WHEN Constant Earle realized from the sudden pause in the race that something had gone wrong with the bridge, he

seized the rein of "Mad Bess," who was secured near the porter's lodge, and, in the characteristic impetuosity of his nature, waited for no further interpretation of the mystery, but mounted and dashed out into the highway. He knew Miss Delano had been in peril and might need assistance. The fleet mare was allowed no respite in her flight till she had passed under the shadows of the Kil's banks, entered the village on the Hudson, and then galloped up to the summit of the hill south of the town. He did not dream of the peril to which the fearless girl had been subjected. It was enough for him to know that she had been thrilled by danger, perhaps unnerved. A generous nature flies to the assistance of the imperilled or the agitated without pausing to analyze the motives. He believed that he loved Nacoochee. He knew that he admired the mistress of "Sublimity" and her wonderful combination of beauty, intelligence, and spirit. He knew, too, that she was his friend. A secret and undefined magnetism gave them pleasure in each other's society. But the constancy and integrity of his heart kept his thoughts so busily engaged upon the memory of The Evening Star, that he had little leisure to analyze his real sentiment for the heiress. He knew it would be unjust to the memory of the governess to enter the race for Miss Delano's hand. And yet he could not conceal from himself his satisfaction when he discovered that Warwick was leaving every competitor behind him.

The exultation of his spirit at her escape from all matrimonial entanglements induced him to make the rather unexpected declaration, when he met her issuing from her estate on to the highway: —

"I am delighted at your escape from the matrimonial net, Miss Delano. I feared once that you were lost when that black Arabian closed with you at the entrance of the wood. But what was the matter at the bridge? Every one turned back but you, and you seemed to be walking your horse across."

She was amazed at this apparition. Was it possible, that, of all her friends, this man alone cared enough for her to hasten to her relief, — this loved object who would not compete for a hand she had been willing to give him? She was a woman to appreciate rapidity of kindness and consideration.

"And are you the only one who has been thoughtful enough to fly to my assistance?"

"I am sure I don't know, Miss Delano. I never stopped to see if any one was following me. Can I help you? You look pale."

"Oh, you are so kind! and I am so faint, I can hardly keep my seat! Please help me to dismount for a moment. Is there no water near?"

She was indeed overcome with excitement and peril. He assisted her to the ground. That elegant figure, clasped for an instant in his arms, thrilled every drop of blood in his body. She sat upon the bank by the roadside while he secured Warwick, and then rode away to the nearest house for water for her. She looked far away down the road. No equestrian was coming. He had been the only thoughtful one on the estate of "Sublimity." How fortunate after all that he had not joined in the contest! That fleet Arabian unquestionably would have beaten everything but Warwick. She knew not the fact that Saad, the favorite servant, had been sent to Arabia by Montrose Earle for the single purpose of securing a horse that could outstrip her hunter. The indomitable will and perseverance of the lion hunter had been foiled by the matchless supremacy of Warwick.

She sat alone by the wayside, faint and dizzy, waiting for him. How noble and thoughtful was he ever, and so many cares and anxieties of his own to trouble him! Why had he not entered the race? Could it have been that he had no horse in which he could place confidence? Could he really have been indifferent to her? Then why manifest such precipitate anxiety to come to her assistance before any of those who pretended to esteem her so highly? A woman's heart clings to many scattering straws before she sinks in the sea of silent despair. Ah, he was coming at last! Graceful and kingly as the Orphic sun-god, swift as the winged cupbearer of Jove, bringing her wine and water. He dismounted and sat beside her. He learned the wonderful story of the shattered bridge, and that his brother had been the foremost contestant. Then he revealed to her the existence of a note that had been handed to him by a servant just before the commencement of the race. It bore the signature of his brother, and, after an elaborate expression of sorrow at his conduct regarding the weight, had solicited pardon. Can a Christian refuse to pardon even to the extent of seventy times seven? He had yielded again, and in the porter's lodge penned a note and despatched it, freely

and fully forgiving the offences of the past, and promising to verify the pardon by accepting the invitation to "Silvicola" before his return to the city. Miss Delano was ignorant of the estrangement consequent upon the terrific battle in the apartment of the Greek tutor. She now only learned that Constant Earle had been invited to "Silvicola," and had accepted.

"Miss Delano," said her companion at length, "I would like to make a request of you. It will inconvenience you little and will gratify me much. If you are willing to do me a favor, without demanding explanations, I will solicit one."

"You have manifested such gentle consideration for me, Mr. Earle, that I volunteer to undertake anything in your behalf."

"That is too generous. My request is apparently only a trifling one. I have a miniature of my mother, painted by a Greek artist. Will you be kind enough to guard it for me, and return it to me when I call upon you in the city?"

"Certainly; but what a strange request!"

"You said, Miss Delano, that you would do me the favor without explanations!"

"Indeed I will. But my nature is womanly after all. My exclamation was only an assertion of what you men denominate the peculiar gift of my sex. I will take possession of your mother's picture with pleasure. Have you it with you?"

"No; it is too heavy to carry about with me. It is in my room. The artist painted it on a brass weight, which is evidently very ancient, and is marked all over with hieroglyphics."

"Ah, something as unintelligible as the symbols on the adoratorios at Palenque, I suppose."

"Equally mysterious, Miss Delano, and I must confess my curiosity to decipher them has lost me many an hour's sleep."

"What a confession! Then men have curiosity as well as women. Your candor is commendable. But what is the particular dragon in the way of your research? Ackerblad, Young, and Champollion have pioneered the mystic wilderness for you."

"Want of books, authorities. This deficiency drives me nearly frantic. I imagine I have the despair of some surviving sage of the Chinese empire when Chi Ho-ang-t

destroyed all the books and learned men. I am in a more deplorable predicament than the sage; for I have little acquired knowledge to fall back upon."

"But your paradise is just before you then, Mr. Earle. Your brother has an admirable library of everything on antiquity. I have scanned the backs and titles of many rare works there, which I should like to be able to understand. He has placed above his collection the Greek inscription which was on the gates of the Ptolemæan library, and which signifies, he said, 'the physic of the soul.'"

"That is what I need, Miss Delano, and in the old-fashioned allopathic doses."

"Well, there you will find everything. I use the word in its comparative sense. It is particularly rich in rare antique volumes. But to what particular epoch is your research directed? I took notes of some titles in your brother's library, and I may recollect, even now, some of the unfamiliar names."

"This is my difficulty, Miss Delano. Plato is the authority for the statement that Solon, who was remotely connected with him, was engaged at the time of his death in the composition of a great poem illustrating the prosperity of Attica before the Ogygian flood, which Varro places one thousand six hundred years before the first Olympiad, that is, twenty-seven years later than the deluge according to the Hebrew text. The fragments of this poem, or the materials for its composition, fell into the hands of Plato. They celebrated the wars which the State of Attica waged with the inhabitants of Atlantis before the deluge. Ogyges, first King of Athens and Thebes, was the only man who escaped this flood. Solon's knowledge was derived from the learned priests of Egypt, whom he visited. I assume that this Atlantis was the American continent and its adjacent islands. Carli and others sustain my premises. My object is to strengthen my position by an examination of the earliest traditions of antiquity. I must inspect the Zend-Avesta, the Schah-Nameh, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata. These two last are epic poems, giving the religion, civilization, and customs of ancient Hindus. Even the Megha Duta and the Sakuntala, which Wilson made familiar to English scholars, might aid me. I have the nerve to probe the varieties of the Sanscritoid, the Arabized Praecritoid, and the Dravidian languages, if only they may yield me one

fact pertinent to my purpose. I would like to study the legendary tales of the Puranas, also the Greek Theogonies. The Chinese annals claim that their empire is the most ancient in the world, and that their first King Fo-hi was Noah himself. It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to study those annals in Du Halde's History of China. I would like to consult the *Chou-king* of Confucius. Even the Mahavansi, 'the Genesis' of the Buddhists, might cast light upon this antiquarian path. I am seeking every clue and suggestion regarding the antediluvial nations. I have become impressed with the suspicion that my hieroglyphics refer to that remote and hazy period of traditional history."

"You will find in your brother's library some of those titles; but I apprehend, Mr. Earle, you have undertaken a problem which even Archimedes could not have solved."

"I am aware, Miss Delano, that I have not even learned so much as the Accidence, but while there is life there is hope."

"Your chance of interpreting those ancient symbols is about equal to the probability of your being struck by lightning."

"Happy suggestion, Miss Delano! Many ancients and Orientals esteemed those who were struck by lightning as sacred persons, the especial favorites of Heaven. I must confess my antecedents are far from favoring the idea that I am in that happy band, but literary lightning must strike some Champollions, and I intend to cling to every literary lightning-rod within my reach."

"But how can you find time for such research amid your labors as an author? You are writing another book, I hear."

"One research, Miss Delano, sometimes helps another. My new book deals in many references to the past. A man who seeks for diamonds may find gold and silver for daily use, and secure them as he gropes along."

"Which do you consider the gold and silver?"

"My historical references for the enrichment of my manuscript."

"How singular that you should undervalue that which is certain to win you fame and money, and esteem as your diamonds that which is almost purely visionary!"

"No author is certain of success, Miss Delano. Pegasus throws more riders than he bears to the stars."

"He unseats no rider like you, Mr. Earle, whose sublimity and activity remind me of Pindar. Like 'the sacerdotal poet of Greece,' you delight to robe virtue in glorious and vivid colors. You will not be allowed by the noble and the pure to grope forever in the dark and cheerless region of Erebus."

"How kind and generous are the encouraging words of a woman like you! The memory of this moment and your commendation will lighten the burden and solitude of midnight toil."

"What avails my encouragement when the fairest and loveliest of gifted women commend you?"

"I never hear them. A few of your friends at 'Sublimity' speak kindly of my books. But who of them has ever said to me, 'I appreciate your aim in beautifying virtue, when flower-crowned vice is so popular'?"

"And that is the laurel you crave, Mr. Earle?"

"Ay; that I do. The support you have given me in this regard is sweeter and more grateful to me than the vindicatory oration of Cicero reaching the ears of the poet Archias. The regard of a true woman can sustain the steps of many who otherwise would falter. I have seen a strong man saved from falling by clinging to the tendrils of a flower on the side of the dizzy Alps."

"The Peripatetics styled woman *animal occasionatum*. They have manifestly not converted you."

"No, I hold with Calderon, that 'woman is an epitome of heaven.' But drink more of that wine. You require it. You are still quite pale."

"No more, I thank you. I have revived; thanks to you. I believe I should have fallen from my horse in another moment."

How his interest deepened in that fair girl, day by day! Never had he known one act unrefined, one word that made his sensitive nature shudder. Her voice, sweet and powerful in song as the notes of Canens, in conversation uttered language chaste and elegant. She attached every one to her, and he was not proof against her spell. Satisfied in his own mind that he loved the lost Nacoochee, he nevertheless found wonderful fascination in the society and language of the heiress.

"I regret to leave 'Sublimity,' and you, Miss Delano," he said, after a moment's silence. "This visit has been a dream

to me. There have been no unpleasant words or acts on the part of any one. Kindness, gentleness, mirth, have been the peculiarities of 'Sublimity.' I know not that I shall ever again in life be so happy as I have been here. I cannot define the spell which is so soon to be broken. I only know that I leave in sadness and go forth to a hard, cruel, stern life-struggle."

He paused, and in silence looked away to the hazy belt girding the mountains across the river. The heart of his companion seemed to cease its pulsations as she listened. Her riding-whip paused too, in its careless play with the autumnal leaves which were scattered about her. Did he love her after all? Finding that he remained silent, she said, gently: —

"You will be missed by every one at 'Sublimity.' You have made friends here whose regard will never die. As for myself, expressions of esteem are painful. I would rather do or receive one such act of considerate kindness as you have shown to me this morning than to express in words a myriad regards, or receive such in return. And yet I must acknowledge that I, too, am sad at the idea of parting. But there is pleasure mingled with the regret. We shall soon meet again in the city. You have honored me with a trust, a mother's picture. You will come for it soon, and then the memory of our pleasant companionship here will be revived in our converse there."

"Indeed I shall call upon you very soon in the city. But, Miss Delano, there is an unusual degree of intensity in my sadness at this last quiet interview, at what is really our last parting. I cannot define my emotion, for it is so rare —"

At this instant they were interrupted. Wholly absorbed in the present, they had failed to look towards the village, and two horseman were upon them before they were aware of any presence in the neighborhood. Mr. Lagrange and another unsuccessful contestant had made their way through the pathless wood, cleared the division fence, crossed the park, and hastened down the Sorrow Kil in search of the solitary mistress of Warwick. A keen dart of disappointment crossed her heart. What had been that emotion so nearly spoken? It was lost to her in the clatter of hoofs, the exclamations of congratulation and praise at her escape, merry jests, and general hilarity. The two unsuccessful competi

tors appeared not to take seriously to heart their loss of a hand and a great estate. If they felt keenly they were masters of the art of concealment. Miss Delano was speedily assisted to mount, and the four rode away slowly towards "Sublimity." But as they moved along the heiress noticed that Constant Earle participated seldom in the conversation. He was evidently *distrait*. How ardently she hoped his manner was due to the same disappointment that had covered her own heart with a cloud! At length conscious that his silence must occasion strange surmises, after such a marked *tête-à-tête*, his manner relaxed and he became as merry and loquacious as any of the party.

Upon their arrival finally at "Sublimity" a wild greeting awaited them. There was a crowd outside of the gate, who cheered them, and a more elegant assemblage just within the park, who took up the cry. But when the gate was flung open and Warwick dashed in with his long blue ribbon fluttering in the wind, and as intact as when it had been attached to his bit, cheers sounded on every side, and from the distant piazza of the mansion handkerchiefs were waved and clapping of hands was heard.

"Ah, ye beautiful divil!" exclaimed Mike, running along beside Warwick. "Ye've as much sinse as ye have speed. Bad luck to the hull pack that was afeerd to cross the goolf! Shure, in the ould country the fox-hunters wud have laped it afore they'd have lost so beautiful a fox as Miss Dillano, an' may the Lord presarve ye, Miss Dillano, from any mate that's afeered to ride wid ye."

On through the maple avenues bounded Miss Delano and her escort, horsemen and horsewomen joining her from every part, and by the time Warwick had reached the piazza she was honored with a train of retainers worthy of a duchess. She dismounted, passed up the lawn to the gallery, and paused beside Mrs. Deming. That feeble friend held out her hand. Tears of joy and excitement were in her eyes.

"I fancied when I was a girl, May, I could ride, but, bless me, I never saw such leaps as that superb creature made; my heart followed him even when he had vanished. You must have taken lessons from Semiramis. I fear some day you may like her become a dove and fly away sure enough."

The whole cavalcade were now dismounted, and soon all of the guests and the unsuccessful competitors were collected upon the lawn and the gallery. Every one was invited to a

banquet that evening, and at the entertainment ten disappointed bridegrooms were forced to smile at pleasantries at their expense.

"May," whispered Miss Deming once during the evening, "don't you think Constant Earle fancies me?"

"How should I know, Carrie? He appears to be very general in his attentions. But why do you ask?"

"Because he wouldn't ride for your hand. I was sure of him if you couldn't interest him, May."

"*Non sequitur*, my dear child. With men nothing is certain until they have avowed their intentions. My idea is that Mr. Earle is so truthful and straightforward a person that no woman can for an instant fancy she has his heart until he plainly manifests it by word or action. He appears to me like a man so absorbed in the study of the beautiful for his books that love has not yet had an opportunity to plant an arrow in him."

"O May, I heard Mary LeClair tell Mr. Montrose Earle, just now, that your exploit at the bridge was perfectly foolhardy."

"Mary LeClair, for that remark, has my endorsement that she is a sensible woman. I agree with her perfectly. The whole affair originated in your bringing Mr. Lagrange up to me in the park with his challenge."

"I intended no harm by it."

"Certainly not, my dear Carrie. The fault was mine in accepting such wild terms for a race. But I wish you could have witnessed the blank amazement on my pursuer's face when he looked across at Warwick and saw me kissing the dear creature. It reminded me of Lelaps' stony fate, with the part of the fox omitted."

Chapter XL.

The battle of Belief against Unbelief is the never-ending battle!

CARLYLE.

'Tis midnight — round the lamp, which o'er
The chamber sheds its lonely beam,
Is widely spread the varied lore
Which feeds in youth our feverish dream.

BULWER.

THE author of Polymnia sat thoughtful in his chair. He was revelling in the paradise of a *littérateur*. His arm-chair was a dream of luxury and ease. A table of carved walnut beside him was covered with open books and writing materials of the most exquisite pattern. Standard lexicons in many languages, grammars, glossologies, glossaries, every aid to careful research and study were scattered about him; and over the book which he held in his hand an astral lamp shed its soft, pleasant rays. The mystic devices traced amid the stars on the globe of the lamp indicated familiarity with the symbols of the Magi. From every wall the venerable tomes of antiquity and the more graceful volumes of modern science looked down upon him. His brother's library was unequalled on the continent by any private collection. Every astronomical hint from Eudoxus to Mitchell, every astrological theory from Zoroaster to Morin, the adviser of Cardinal Richelieu, found shelter in the carved walnut cases. Even the Zodiacal Physiognomy of Varley was there. On adjustable stands near to his left hand were the ancient geographers. He was confronted by Strabo, the defender of the geography of Homer. This savant, fifty-four years B. C., maintained the globular form of the earth, and to the great joy of the thoughtful student indicated the existence of Atlantis, *America*. Solon, according to the student's premises, 597 years B. C., standing in miniature upon the brass weight, had pointed in common with the Egyptian priests, Psenophis and Senchis, to the same Atlantic Isle; "beyond which was a great continent," said the three through the speaking-trumpet of history to the learned and thoughtful. He had scanned the meagre records of Hecateus and of Dicæarchus, 289 years B. C., and found no clue. Herodotus

a little more than one hundred years after Solon's day, had combated his contemporaries who held firmly to the sphericity of the earth. Here was a stumbling-block. Constant Earle deemed him a blockhead in his geographical character. This authority must be quenched by more careful and ancient geographers. Eudoxus, it was true, 370 years B. C., had the honor of bringing the celestial sphere and the regular astronomy from Egypt to Greece. But this fact was too late for the premises that Solon learned from his Egyptian visit the sphericity of the earth. Was there no earlier knowledge of this globular form to sustain his premises? He had studied patiently and thoroughly. A light beamed upon his research. *Six hundred and ten years before Christ* an older sage than Solon, Anaximander, maintained that the earth *was a globe;* that the sun was twenty-eight times larger than the earth; that the stars were globular and revolved in their respective spheres.

The student laid aside his book for a moment. He had assumed the intelligence of antiquity. That intelligence was an established fact. The popular impression that Columbus discovered the globular form of the earth was hurled from its citadel. More than *two thousand years* before the birth of Columbus the more intelligent savans of antiquity knew of the sphericity of the earth. Had any of the wise men before the Christian era been known to labor for the practical benefit of their race upon this globular base? More intense application to the tomes about him yielded him light upon this inquiry. Two hundred and seventy-six years B. C. Eratosthenes measured the circumference of the earth. Aristotle, three hundred and eighty-four years before the Christian era, advised his countrymen to seek India by a Western passage. Now came the inquiry, naturally enough, Was not Solon more likely, at a period twenty-five hundred years ago, to be possessed of more geographical and astronomical facts relating to the islands and continents of his day than we can possibly know him to have been possessed of when immense public libraries have been swept away by fire and war and the vindictiveness of men? If Anaximander before him knew the sphericity of the earth and the stars, which items of science have trickled down to us through the sands of buried empires, is it not probable that he and his contemporaries possessed a fund of wonderful knowledge in every department of science and every school of art? If twenty

five hundred years from to-day a strange race shall discover upon the American continent a book which establishes the wonderful application of electricity to telegraphic purposes by Morse, will not that future race be justified in conceiving that Morse was possessed of a rare fund of knowledge in other departments of electricity, geography, astronomy, and general science? Assuming this principle of estimating the acquirements of the ancients to be just, why may not Solon, when he learned of the existence of the Atlantic Isle, have learned the habits, laws, temples, physiognomies, and wars of its inhabitants? Did Solon know nothing but the mere name of Atlantis? Did the Morse, who died twenty-five hundred years ago, in the nineteenth century, know nothing of electricity except that it could be applied to telegraphing as was handed down through the civil tumults of ages?

The student studied long, and decided at last to persevere in the belief that Solon and the Egyptian savans knew of the continent and the races in America. That knowledge was concentrated, he doubted not, in the brazen antique. Leaving, then, the ancients for a time, he crossed in thought the Atlantic and resumed the study of the lost nationalities of America. Who had inhabited the Western Hemisphere? How far back in the shadowy ages could nationalities be traced? He studied carefully the wonderful earth-works on the banks of the Little Miami. The line of circumvallation of one fort extended the remarkable distance of four miles, and varied in height, according to the natural advantages of the ground, from ten to twenty feet. In Wisconsin, Ohio, and Iowa huge earth-works have been examined scientifically, which bear the outlines of men and animals, forming immense basso-relievos. Squire and Davis, in 1846, surveyed in Ohio an apparent earth-work constructed in the form of a serpent, more than *one thousand feet* in length, gracefully curved, and terminating in a triple coil at the tail. The embankment was then about five feet in height by thirty feet base at the centre of the serpent, and then diminishing properly towards the head and tail. The mouth was wide open, with huge jaws ejecting or swallowing an earthen egg about four feet in height, with transverse and conjugate diameters of one hundred and sixty and eighty feet. It is supposed to represent the Oriental cosmological story of the serpent and the egg. In these and other Western States were found, in vast mounds, elegant carvings in stone for use and ornament,

silver ware, copper ware, and porphyry. Scientific men announced their conviction that these wonders of the Mississippi Valley are, at least, *two thousand years* old. The traditions of the Indians uniformly declare that all these great earth-works were found here by their first ancestors who came to the country.

But suggestive as these ancient tumuli were of an Asiatic origin, the student was inevitably drawn in his studies to the central light further to the southward. There was a civilization more elegant and mature which had passed away before the Asiatic semi-civilized hordes had overwhelmed America. The Aztec civilization itself paled before the brilliant civilization of Palenque which had preceded it. The elegance of the Central American palaces and temples, and the many obvious resemblances to the symbolical worship of Egypt, impress the careful student of both hemispheres. These resemblances had already been carefully traced by the author of Polymnia before he had gained admittance to his brother's library. The examination of the terraced heights and tower of Santa Crutz Del Quiché, formerly occupied by the kings of Quiché and Kachiquel, who claimed a descent from the Toltecan Indians, whose traditions affirm that they originally came to Central America under Tanub, who revolted from Moses in the wilderness, recalled an earlier nationality than Palenque Then he turned his attention to the wonderful monuments of Peru. at Tia Huanaco. Their antiquity is unquestionably immense. M. D'Orbigny, who carefully inspected them, pronounced them more ancient than the ruined temples of Palenque, and exhibiting a more advanced civilization. The débris form mounds nearly one hundred feet in height, enclosed by pillars of temples varying in extent from six hundred to twelve hundred feet. The angular columns are colossal. There are porticos to these temples hewn from one solid mass of rock, and adorned with elegant carvings in relief. Some of the figures are symbols of the sun, and the condor, his messenger. There are found statues of basalt, the same rock as the famous Rosetta stone. These statues are covered with reliefs, "in which the design of the carved head *is half Egyptian.*" Could Solon and the Egyptian priests have known of these people?

He turned to a volume of the great and cautious Humboldt and read thus: "What striking analogies exist between the monuments of the Old World and those of the

Toltecs, who, arriving on Mexican soil, built several of those colossal structures, truncated pyramids, divided by layers like the temple of Belus, at Babylon. Whence did they take the model of these edifices? Were they of the Mongol race? Did they descend from a common stock with the Chinese, the Hiong-Nu, and the Japanese?

It is contended, by some, that the type of all artificial high places designed for sacred purposes is to be found in the tower of Babel, and that the Babylonian temples as well as the pyramidal edifices of India and America were but traditional transcripts of the great structure on the plain of Shinar, the central point whence radiated all the families of the earth and the nation of every continent."

These suggestions of the great savant apropriately cover the Aztec and Central American sacrificial mounds, temple-crowned, and the lofty flight of rocky steps crested by the elegant sanctuary of Palenque. The traveller and savant Stephens, who examined the latter temple after his researches in Egypt, Arabia Petræa, and the Holy Land, is unwilling to admit the resemblances to the temples and worship of Egypt. One reason of his hesitation is thus stated: "Columns are a distinguishing feature of Egyptian architecture, grand and massive, and at this day towering above the sands, startling the wondering traveller in that mysterious country. There is not a temple on the Nile without them; and the reader will bear in mind that among the whole of these ruins not one column has been found." Surely this objection cannot be urged against the temples of Peru at Tia Huanaco, where the columns are immense, and the dromos, the pronaos, and the adytum startlingly manifest, and the sculptures *half Egyptian*. Was it possible that Solon and his Egyptian instructors could have known, in addition to their knowledge of the sphericity of the earth, of this contemporary American nationality? Was it contemporary? Might it not have been similar to the Egyptian, and still older? Africa boasts a civilization older than that of Thebes. High up among the convergent streams which form the Nile were temples and hieroglyphics when Egypt was an untamed wilderness. Meroe was the ancient nursery of Egyptian civilization and art. No doubt the friends of Solon on the Nile conversed with him upon their ancestry, and the architecture and religion of the far-off worshippers of Ammon. Would they not communicate to the Grecian

lawgiver the knowledge of that wonderful *ship* used in Meroe on the altar of Ammon, made of cedar and plated with gold? Strange symbol, that sacred ship, for a nationality who knew nought of navigation! Whence came the nationality and civilization of Meroe? The general supposition points to India. The name assuredly bears strong resemblance to Meros, the mountain of India sacred to Jupiter. Meru of Indian mythology is similar. The form of the pyramid in this ancient nursery of Egypt approaches that of the primeval mounds of the Old World and the sacrificial pyramids of Central America and Mexico. From the people of this ancient land no doubt the Egyptian priests derived the traditions regarding the Atlantic Isle which they communicated to Solon.

Eager now in his search he turned to the ancient Greek poet. The Arundelian marbles place Homer nine hundred and seven years B. C. What could the blind sage have signified by Ogygia, in the midst of the ocean, the island where dwelt Calypso, the entertainer of Ulysses? She was the daughter of Atlas, who, according to the Theogony of Hesiod, supported the heaven on his head and hands *in the extreme west*. The Atlas of Homer was not the personification of a mountain of Libya; that was a later and corrupt rendering of the ancient legend. The poet conceived Ogygia to lie far away in the western sea, remote from all other coasts. Was not this a legend or tradition of the Atlantic Isle? May not the continent beyond Ogygia have been that standing-place of Calypso's father, where he held the heaven upon his head and hands? The Homeric mythology assuredly locates the Elsyian fields on the western margin of the earth by Oceanus, the great river into which the sun appeared to sink at evening. What more perfect description could be conceived of tropical America than his picture of the *Atlantides* or Fortunate Islands?—

> "Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime;
> The fields are florid with unfading prime;
> From the bleak pole, no winds inclement blow,
> Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;
> But from the breezy deep the blessed inhale
> The fragrant murmurs of the western gale."

If the ancients, or the *savans* of the ancients, knew of the Western Hemisphere, either as an inhabited land or as a

country inhabited at a remote antiquity, why had they concealed their knowledge in a weight of brass? Why had the trio of wise men masked their science or geography in hieroglyphics? Might it not have been from anxiety to retain the secret among a chosen few? The student paused in his historical examination, and with his hand shaded his weary eyes. Would it not be a triumph of scholarship to unravel that ancient mystery? Was there a human possibility of interpreting the symbols about the periphery of the brass? He must bend his energies now to that one object. A fortunate solution of the problem might be of incalculable benefit to him. Why was his brother so frantic to gain possession of the weight? Could he already have interpreted the occult symbolism? Now or never he must make the effort. Books rich in the lore of every land were at his command. In a few days he must relinquish everything comfortable and convenient, and return to the drudgery of the law-office and his night labors upon his new book. Where should he turn first? What system of interpretation should he first adopt? Was the symbolism the hieroglyphic, the hieratic, or the demotic? Probably the hieratic, as that was peculiar to the priests of Egypt. This form of writing differs from the hieroglyphical principally in the more frequent substitution of alphabetic characters for pictured objects. He had a copy of his symbols in a card with him. He examined the characters minutely. He took from the bookcase works containing writings in the three forms. His symbols were most wofully unlike either. Clearly engraved in the brass, there was no mistaking their formation. They were equilateral triangles, flowers, cones, clubs, zigzag lightning, simple crosses, spears, all well defined. Not one character resembled the hieratic in the book before him. What did that first character of all signify? It was an equilateral triangle. In Christianity it symbolized the Trinity. What was its meaning before the Christian era? Could it be intended to symbolize the union of the three wise men in the secret?

This was possible. But an examination of the subsequent symbols induced him to discard this supposition. No sense resulted from such a construction. He must start anew. How anxiously, patiently, he strove to reconcile his symbols with the three forms of writing in the Egyptian tomes. Not a single spark of light beamed upon his investigation. Ideographic and phonetographic (as is the entire system of Egyp

than writing) threw him into fearful confusion. Some ridiculous sentences resulted from his efforts in this department. His first sentence as he worked it out, ran thus: "Clear off to bed." He looked puzzled at first, and then laughed merrily. The sense of the comical was inherent in him and largely developed. He inaugurated another line of suppositions, assuming that each symbol was intended for the first letter of a word which denoted the symbol. Persistently he clung to this idea, toiled at it for an hour, and when his sentence was framed into English, read it aloud thus: "What a bundle of stuff!" Another merry laugh ensued. Could the writing be iconographic? Were these figures pictures of visible objects? That was unquestionably the original writing. It availed him nothing, however. All was a tangle, a puzzle, a worry, — finally a torment. He toiled away for hours. All was vanity and vexation of spirit. He tried every system of interpretation that his brother's voluminous library afforded. He discovered that the Devangari was originally written from right to left. That was an idea worth applying to his symbols. He rewrote everything again, and read the sentences backward. The confusion and absurdity of words produced a remarkable result. He leaned back in his chair in utter despair. The interpretation of hieroglyphics was no child's play.

Montrose Earle entered at this juncture in orange silk dressing-gown, smoking-cap with long tassel, and bearing his Persian *caleeoon*. He stretched himself upon a divan, after placing a box of cigars beside his brother, and then proceeded to envelop himself in a cloud of smoke. The author of Polymnia lighted a cigar and leaned back in his arm-chair. Such luxuries would soon be over, and he resolved to make the most of them.

"I could easily snuff out my candle of life here, Montrose. This treasury of books is too much for me. I never should know when to sleep and rest."

"I should think not," was the response from lips muffled in mouth-piece and smoke. "The rosy fingers of Eos will soon fling open the gates of day, according to the Homeric conceit, and astonish you."

"Is that so?" was the amazed ejaculation. "I supposed it was only twelve o'clock."

"Yes; you have frittered away an entire night poring over musty tomes. *Cui bono?*"

"I was anxious to discover if the ancients knew of the existence of America."

"I'll wager 'Silvicola' against that antique umbrella of grandfather's, which your modesty prompted you to select out of the family relics I offered you, that the ancients knew no such thing."

"Are you positive?"

"No; experience has taught me to be positive of nothing." He resumed the mouth-piece, and enveloped this cynicism in a huge cloud of smoke.

"But your *judgment* is against this geographical knowledge of antiquity."

"You have said it."

"Very good, Monsieur Montrose. We will in the face of this admission resume a fractured conversation. You did me the honor to remark once to-day that the apostles of Christ borrowed the fable of the incarnation from the creeds of Asia."

"Very well," replied the master of "Silvicola."

"You admitted that the universality of the tradition of the deluge rendered it highly probable that the world must one day have been completely submerged. You thought the coincidence of the traditions of the American Indians with all the traditions of the Eastern nations, conclusive evidence of the great antiquity and truth of the story of a universal deluge."

"I did, sir."

"Why, then, is not the coincidence of American tradition regarding the incarnation conclusive evidence also of the immense antiquity and truth of that doctrine?"

"I should be strongly inclined to believe such a doctrine, if it had the sanction of both hemispheres in antiquity. But there never was an American tradition to that effect."

"Softly, softly, brother mine. It is not scholarly to assert without examination. See how beautifully the doctrine of the incarnation, revealed to Adam and Eve upon their fall, has escaped the ruin of the deluge, and floated down to us through the medium of the ark, that life-boat which heaved up and down upon the Ogygian flood, upon the Deucalion overflow, upon the ocean which submerged India and China and Scandinavia; that canoe which saved the ancestor of the American Indians. After the escape of Noah, when the primitive religion faded away and so many

valuable traditions of science were shrouded in obscurity, one primitive doctrine survived, flourished like an exquisite flower upon the rocks of polytheism, the universal belief in the Virgin and the Messiah. Investigate the religious chronicles of all nations. You will find a virgin promised and her divine maternity predicted, or an actual occurrence. All theogonies shadow it forth. In Thibet, Japan, and a portion of India, the god Fo for the redemption of man was born of the virgin Lhamoghiuprul, the fairest and holiest. The mother of the Chinese 'Son of Heaven,' Hoang-Ti, conceived by a flash of lightning. The mother of Yao was a virgin, who conceived from the beam of a star. Yu was born of a maiden whose chaste bosom received a pearl (the Tartar globe of light) which fell from heaven. Heou-Tsi was born of a virgin, in a deserted grotto where oxen and lambs warmed him with their breath. Sching-Mou, the great goddess of the Celestial Empire, conceived at the touch of a water-lily, and her son, reared under a fisherman's roof, attained eminence and performed miracles. The god of Siam, Sommonokhodom, was born of a virgin made fruitful by the sun's rays. The virgin Maha-Mahai brought forth Buddha. Lao-Tseu was born of a black virgin, 'wonderful and fair as the jasper.' Isis of the Egyptians was a virgin mother. The Druids held that the future Saviour would be born of their Isis. The Brahmins hold that when a god assumes human flesh, the divine power causes the womb of a virgin to conceive. Jagrenat, *the mutilated* saviour of men, and Crichna, born in a grotto and attended by angels and shepherds, had each a virgin mother. The Oriental legend of the birth of the great prophet Zoroaster or Zer, Ateucht, *the silver washed*, affirms that upon the face of the Babylonian Dogdo, in a dream, a celestial light was cast, and she became fair as *the day-star*, and brought forth the prophet of the Magi. Previously a glorious messenger from Oromazes had visited her, and presented magnificent robes. Abulfarages states that Zoroaster himself predicted to the Magi the birth of a Messiah born of a virgin; that a new star would arise to guide them to him, and they must carry gifts to his birthplace. Sharistani, a Mussulman author, relates a similar tale of Zoroaster's prophecy."

"I am waiting, patiently, my fine theological savant for your American confirmation," quietly remarked Montross

Earle, removing from his lips the pipe-stem. "I have read several of your authorities myself. Give us the *Western Virgin* and the Messiah. *Hoc opus, hic labor est.*"

"Patience, my fine *arbiter elegantiarum*. I must make my Eastern authorities cumulative. Then I will fire a shot which will startle your Voltairian school. The Oriental traditions avow that the virgin, notwithstanding the royal blood in her veins, was of obscure condition. The tyrant Nemroud was anxious to compass the death of the virgin's son. Like Herod, he missed his prey. The child was born in a poor stable; he dwelt among the lower classes like the son of the Chinese goddess; angels and shepherds came to him, as to Chrichna. Then he stilled the tempest, walked on the water, cast out demons, raised the dead, and mounted into heaven in the presence of five hundred disciples, whose dazzled eyes lost him in the clouds. Now for America. The Algonkin son of God, Manibozho, was born of a virgin mother. The Maceniques, who inhabit the shores of Lake Zarayas, in Paraguay, held this doctrine, — and here in one of your own volumes I have marked it for you, — that at a remote antiquity a virgin of rare beauty became a mother. Her son worked many extraordinary miracles, and one day arose into the sky, before his astonished disciples, and became the sun."

The *sang-froid* of the savant vanished. He sprang to his feet in excitement, exclaiming, "Show it to me." His eyes ran over the statement. He flung back the leaves to the title-page. Dare he deny his own authority? He turned again to the statement and carefully perused it.

"Good God! he exclaimed; "is this possible? Has there been a Redeemer of the souls of men, confirmed by the testimony of countless ages and peoples?"

"Ay!" was the triumphant response beside him; "and this hour mother sits with him in heaven. She never doubted with her pure heart and her queenly intellect."

The savant sat absorbed in mental excitement. The startling confirmation of the West rang like a trumpet-peal of triumph to countless voices of the East. The voice of the younger scholar resumed: —

"What are Voltaire, Herbert, Chubb, Tindal, Morgan, beside such men as Grotius, Stillingfleet, Butler, Leland, Watson, and the terrific union of uncounted millions of intellects in every age and every clime? If there is one

glorious, sublime, beautiful idea above another, calculated to arouse and fire the enthusiasm of mortals, it is the reflection and the truth that the Son of God died to redeem us. I wonder not, never did, that the crusaders clung to the rescue of that holy sepulchre. Adorable God! how inspiring and glorious to die in such a cause; to fling away life in any clime or any land that one soul might be saved for such a King or any item of his honor and glory! Mahomet even, overwhelmed by the grandeur of that Messiah and the splendor of his character, elevates him to the pedestal of one of the six great prophets of his religion."

The listener stood in silence a moment, and then said sullenly: —

"Boulanger admits the universality of the expectation of a Messiah, but calls it a universal chimera."

"Ay, he did that. But your authority is unfortunate. He thought differently, happily for him, when he came to die."

"But the Jews deny that he has come. The predictions of the Messiah, upon which Christians rely, are not interpreted to suit them by the Rabbins. The decision turns upon the construction of words like *schebet* and *schilo*. They call *schebet* a *rod*, and not a *sceptre*. They deny that *schilo* can be rendered messiah."

"*Certainement*, *monsieur*, they do; but their old books give them the lie. The Paraphrase of Onkelos is against them in the interpretation of *schebet*. 'Judas shall not be without a (*schebet*), *supreme ruler*, nor without scribes of the sons of her children, till the Messiah come.' The Jews venerate Jonathan, the first of the disciples of Hillel, almost as much as Moses. He translates *schebet* principality, and *schilo* messiah. The Paraphrase of Jerusalem is also against them. The most ancient, the most reliable, the most venerated commentaries of this unfortunate people are foes to their modern interpretations."

He spoke eagerly, enthusiastically, in the cause of God, and his brother returned to the divan, saying, calmly, "I must investigate this matter further. You carry too many guns for me to-night."

After a long silence, during which he had lain upon the divan enveloped in smoke and reverie, he arose and left the room, saying: —

"You had better discontinue your flirtation with Clio, and clear for the arms of Somnus, or your brain will not honor drafts upon it to-morrow, or rather to-day. I left a curious old book upon your dressing-table for you, which you can amuse yourself with. It is an antique, which you will never probably have an opportunity to read elsewhere in America. It contains the Oriental legends of the Ichthyophagi and the Chelanophagi. You will find some allusions there also to Oromasdes and Ahrimanes. They may strengthen your theological position. *Bon soir!*"

Chapter XLI.

O sleep, sweet sleep!
Whatever form thou takest, thou art fair,
Holding unto our lips thy goblet filled
Out of oblivion's well, a healing draught!

LONGFELLOW.

WHEN the author of Polymnia had retired to his room for the night he was too nervous from study and mental excitement to sleep. Flinging aside his coat, he donned a blue silk dressing-gown, which had been deposited upon a chair for him, and wandered about the apartment, examining its elegant appointments and the curiosities which decorated it on every side. There was an exquisite cabinet of minerals and natural curiosities recalling the collections of Sloane. On the mantel-piece was an imitation of the ancient obelisk-shaped monument El-Ooted, and beside it was an antique ivory miniature of an Assyrian king from Mosul, holding aloft the Egyptain *crux ansata*, or emblem of the eternal life. How unerringly had that symbol of salvation haunted the nations from Adam to Christ! At his feet was crouching a sphinx. Empires had risen and crumbled through the ages, and the perfect preservation of the ivory king and sphinx mocked at their fallen grandeur. A small *bijou* of a cabinet above a writing-desk indicated the numismatical science of the master of "Silvicola." From a study of this rare collection the eyes of Constant Earle wandered to a painting of a fearless and handsome rover of Salé, and then to a striking

por rait of an aged savant of Morocco wrapped in his *khiv keh*, and sitting in profound study over the Koran, his long, white beard sweeping the sacred volume, and a small lamp illumining his aged and rapt face. It recalled to the spectator vivid memories of that strange land where he had swept dreamily on his barb through orange and pomegranate groves, beside winding streams, and under the irregular, scattering oaks of North Africa, bounding up the gentle swellings of the ground where white buildings clustered, and the slender minarets of the mosques pierced the sky. He saw again the lofty, broken line of the Allasaba, the picturesque costumes of Jews and Bedouins, the Moorish gardens, riotous in their neglected luxuriance, the wild pear-trees and fig, the ruined castle of Dar Koresi, and the groves of exceeding loveliness on the banks of the Felifle and the Bu Nasr, where he had caught glimpses of that wonderful beauty of the Arab maids which fades with Oriental rapidity. The pictue of the Mussulman savant revived these scenes, when he was a favorite son of affluent parents, and struggles and poverty were myths, when he could rove in many lands, culling their beauties for his mental museum, and free and merry as the Celtic thrush. No wonder he recognized the vividness and impressive dignity of the Eastern scholar, and the exclamation of that wizard land escaped him, "*Wallah! taïb! taïb keter!*" — "Excellent, by heavens! most excellent!"

Another and more beautiful spur to memory met his eye as he moved along. It was a full-length portrait of a Bedouin maid of Morocco, a figure small and exquisitely fashioned, the hand and foot diminutive. She was in the budding and blooming time of maidenhood, extraordinarily gifted with sensuous beauty, and with the winning innocence and purity of face which characterize a child. The face was oval, the mouth a sculptor's dream, the chin full and round. The eyes were large, dark, and full of impassioned feeling. Only the cultivated intelligence of modern civilization was wanting. But she was in keeping with the thickets of pink oleander, the oderiferous blossoming shrubs, the innumerable wild flowers, the white narcissus, the myrtle, the arbutus, and the luxuriant orange groves of her native land, whose skies are gemmed with stars large, liquid, and luminous as those that met the uplifted eyes of the tribe of Issachar, the pastoral astronomers who followed the fortunes of Moses.

Strange that this beautiful wanderer over African plains and sunny hill-sides should recall the sweetness and loveliness of the brilliant Nacoochee, The Evening Star. But so wrapt was his poetic heart in the memory of his Spanish scholar that every beauty animate or inanimate suggested her. In daily reveries she stood beside him, with her genius eyes bent tenderly upon him and in night-dreams she arose upon the dark horizon, the earliest and most luminous star. He could not forget her. She haunted him; his heart grew weary and sick from her long silence; that she heeded him not, noticed not his search for her, influenced not his regard. She would ever be the dream, the yearning, the wild, impassioned love of his life. He stood then before this beautiful maid of Morocco, and smiled at her beauty, because Nacoochee, too, was a woman. The Evening Star came to him no more. Hence he worshipped all beautiful objects for her sake. Every epithet of beauty or power came at times to his lips. "Ah, Nacoochee," he murmured, as the beauty of the Bedouin maid grew upon him, "thou art fair as Rachel, prudent as Abigail, heroic as Esther, chaste as Susannah, fearless as the lily-crowned Judith. Not all the cedar of Lebanon, the perfumes of Saba, the silver-laden fleets of Tyre, or the gold of Ophir, can buy my heart from the memory of thee." No Isiac devotee, no Dionysian enthusiast, ever clung more zealously to the shrine of their deities than his faithful heart to the lost governess.

He wandered on again through his sumptuous apartment pausing to study once a sketch of an Arabian *douar* made by Montrose Earle between Tangiers and Tetuan. There were some forty dusky tents arranged in a crescent, with the horns pointing to the East. The Bedouins were absent with the flocks and herds, and the women were busily at work. On the east side a part of the canvas of each tent was raised by a cord and flung back on the roof. A splendid gray barb was in the foreground, unfettered and moving across the plain at his leisure, *en grand seigneur*. In the distance was a view of the Atlas mountains, cloud-capped, and on the lower ranges clad with sunshine. There was a rocky defile at the left, where, near a copse of palmeta, sat an Arab, with swarthy visage, and matchlock and spear beside him. The artist had found him in a flowing bernouse, and sketched even his dagger-hilt. These nomads select their

camping-ground ever with an artist's eyes to picturesque effect.

Unfortunately for the weary student he espied a choice library of books at the remote end of his room. What scholar ever is contented with a passing glance at new and curious tomes? That glance invariably steals precious moments from necessary sleep. He opened the doors of the case for a look at one title-page, and before he left had scanned twenty. A few pages of Palladio's Antiquities of Rome were culled and stored in memory, and then "*Tales of the Ramad'han*" were slightly skimmed. The *Puranas* then yielded a brief tribute to the scholar of cosmogony and the ancient sciences, and an addition to his knowledge of the genealogy of the Hindoo gods. A gleaming of mingled fables and moral principles was next taken from *Pantra Tantra*. The *Institutes of Menu* gave him glimpses of civil and religious law. *Bhagarat Gheeta* could not be laid quickly aside when it revealed such sublime ideas of the deity among the idolaters as this. "Being immaterial, he is above all conception: being invisible, he can have no form: from what we behold in his works we may conclude that he is eternal, omnipotent, knowing all things, and present everywhere. God is one centre of all that is. God is like a perfect sphere, without beginning or end."

He was so weary at length that he closed the bookcase, and walked away towards his dressing-table. The penalty of excessive study was throbbing again in the crown of his head. Unfortunate scholar! there lay the volume of which his brother had spoken. Should he be prudent and leave it until he had slept? One glimpse could do no harm. That last hasty glimpse has many a time laid scholars in their graves, or confined them behind the bars of a mad-house. In this instance that concluding glimpse yielded him sleep; but so deep that the thunders of Jove doubly charged with sound could not awake him. The leaves were drugged by one who was skilled in the magic art and science of poisons as Circe. It was not a fatal exhalation from the book, only a powerful narcotic of long duration if not arrested by the the antidote. A student absorbed in the acquisition of facts would never notice that faint, impalpable effluvium which slowly, gently undermined his senses and placed him absolutely within the physical power of another. That book had been suggested to the younger brother by that indomi-

table will which never faltered in a purpose. That brass weight must change ownership, and that right speedily. Ha! ha! a Christian who forgives and pardons seventy times seven does not necessarily stultify himself. Christianity is not a synonyme for folly. "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves." The gift of the Greek was safe in fair and honorable hands. Slowly and thoughtfully the student turned over the leaves till he reached the matters which Montrose had mentioned. He studied the theories of the good and the evil principle which governed the universe of the Magi. Slowly and surely the exhalation from the leaves performed its narcotic mission. He was growing drowsy. "How fortunate!" he thought to himself; "soon I shall be able to sleep, and this terrible pain in my brain will pass away." Some Oriental allusion surprised him, and he turned again to the title-page of the book. What had that subject to do under such a title? Fortunate retrograde movement for his fate! Something in the antique lettering of the title attracted his attention. There were minute images within each letter. He had not noticed them before. He held the book close to the lamp that he might examine them. As he did so the cover of the book approached so close to the flaming wick that it was nearly burned. The paper lining of the cover was slightly scorched. He withdrew it quickly from danger, and, to his amazement, discovered that there was writing upon the blank cover which had not been there before. He was perfectly confident of the fact. He had looked upon opening the book for the first time at his brother's name. It was the only writing upon that blank page. He was willing to swear to it. Now new writing had mysteriously and suddenly manifested itself close beside the tiny scorched spot. Had fire brought it out? He had heard of such phenomena. He held the blank page again to the light, bringing it as near as he dared. Other writing appeared in black letters. He developed sentences as the heat of the lamp warmed the page. How marvellous, and yet an old story! Finally the heat of the lamp would evoke no more of the hidden chirography. It was his brother's writing. There was no mistaking that. It read thus: —

"The hieroglyphics on the brass are unquestionably solved by studying the symbols of the gods and goddesses. The next step must be the possession of the antique."

The eyes of Constant Earle were rapidly growing dim

Everything was assuming a hazy look. In the last moments of his consciousness that wonderful announcement burned into his brain. Nothing would ever eradicate it. It had become a part of the treasures in the storehouse of memory never to be forgotten. The wonderful discovery of Landauer, that the sesquichloride of iron and sodium will produce an invisible writing upon paper which will appear in black letters by the action of caloric, had revealed to the owner of the antique from Salamis a key for the interpretation of the symbols. He was rapidly sinking under the influence of the subtile narcotic; his eyes were closed, the book had fallen upon the floor, his head reclined against the back of the chair into which he had dropped in his stupor. But the savant of "Silvicola" had overreached himself. An accident, resulting from his crafty programme, had wrested from him a wonderful sceptre, a power of which he faintly dreamed, but whose surpassing brilliancy and extent would have startled him like a heavenly bolt shattering at his feet. Presently he entered, and found the beautiful, graceful, noble grappler with poverty helplessly fallen and in his power. It never entered his cool, crafty head to examine the book. It had closed in its fall, and he locked it away in his iron safe in an adjoining room. Then he proceeded with his inspection of his victim. He examined his pockets for the brass weight; it was not there. No doubt it was in the miserable little trunk which held the poor author's limited wardrobe. The younger brother was economizing like a Spartan. He had deposited the balance of the secret gift-money in bank, after providing generously for his sister, and paying his debts. That should be his refuge in case of sickness or prostration. He would cling to the lawyers' office and their miserable compensation until his new book was completed. That anxious hour was not far remote. The struggle with a publisher was near at hand. There would be no assistance from his brother's hand. The cool, determined master of "Silvicola" would yield no vantage ground to the brother who so diligently and heroically thwarted him.

Montrose Earle, finding that the coveted antique was not upon the person of the prostrate man, stood a moment in inspection of him.

"Beautiful as Picus!" he muttered, noting the fair, clear complexion of the drooping face. "No wonder women love you. I would myself. O you noble, heroic fellow, why

have you clung so tenaciously to a promise? Why have you thrown away comfort and a competence for a trifling brass, of whose value you can know nothing? Spartan, Christian, whatever you are that makes you so reliable and so strong! I admire you. By Jove! I can't help it. Brave as Julius Cæsar, honorable as Bayard, just as Aristides, sternly upright and discriminating towards your brother as Timoleon, how I honor your pluck, your tenacity of purpose, your literary genius! Jupiter! you are too beautiful and manly for me to stand here and look upon you. You will undermine my purpose with your splendor."

He turned away to continue his search. Before another half hour had elapsed he had lifted the fallen brother upon the elegant couch, held a phial of bright emerald-colored fluid to his nostrils, and when he was recovering from the mystic narcotic had left the apartment and glided noiselessly away, whispering savagely between his teeth, "Baffled, but not long! I'll follow him through the fiery river which flows over the damned in the Jewish Hades, but I'll have that brazen weight in my grip."

When Constant Earle awoke from his long sleep, and found himself stretched upon his bed with his clothes on, he fancied he had fallen there overcome by study and sleep, and thought no more of it. That sleep of exhaustion was no novelty to the struggling author. He arose and spread open the window-curtains, and gazed away over the woods and lawns where his childhood had dreamed itself away. A sharp frost of the past night had split open the last of the chestnut-burs, and on the crisp carpet of the fallen leaves he heard them drop one by one as the breeze rattled the branches. The home of his youth was rapidly growing desolate in the onward march of the autumn. Soon he must leave it, perhaps forever. The privilege of gazing once more upon the dear old spot had come to him unexpectedly. The great joys of life are of short duration, and he must make the most of this glorious episode in his struggling fate. He was planning visits to the dear old haunts on the estate when a servant entered with a letter. He broke open the missive, and discovered that he was summoned to the city. He had exceeded the time of his leave, and had received no response to his solicitation to be spared a few days longer from the law-office. The attorney who penned the note informed him that an application had been made for his humble situation

in the office, and if he was not seen at his post in two days' time he would forfeit it. He must leave at once. He knew too well the difficulty of securing a situation in the metropolis. He sent the servant to inform his brother of his expected departure, and then hastened away to the park of "Silvicola" for a ramble before the hour for taking the train should arrive. Onward and without definite purpose he wandered, over the lawns, beside the streams which were covered with brown and scarlet leaves, and into the woody thickets where the gray squirrels were leaping in frolic from branch to branch, or laying in their winter store of nuts. A sad, dreamy reverie was upon him. How cruel and strange his fate that doomed him to wander as a stranger over the scenes of his happy youth without one claim or interest to bind him to the place! He felt like an outcast and a wanderer more than ever before. The estate had been his pride. He was as ardently attached to the noble ancestral home as the noblesse of the Old World to their ancient estates. He found at last a spot in the wildwood where the stream was bare of leaves, and the leafless branches of the overarching trees cast their tangled shadows in the water. He stood silently contemplating the limpid creek, and dreaming — dreaming the moments away. He was startled from his meditation by a prolonged howl from the thicket near at hand. He awoke like a trooper to the summons of the bugle. He called loudly towards the undergrowth now wrapped again in silence. The call was answered. Something parted the bushes, eagerly bounding along, and a superb hound dashed into sight, and springing to his side leaped frantically and joyfully upon him. The creature knew him notwithstanding the lapse of time. It was his old favorite, who had years ago followed him and his gun, and in his fox-hunts crossed the country "with ears that sweep away the morning dew." He stooped to caress his old friend, who still was able to utter the wild music of the woods. The creature loved him and followed him eagerly, hoping, no doubt, for that loved voice to put him once more upon the trail. But the sad wrestler with fate was too absorbed in memories of human friends who had passed away forever, too intent upon the life-battle before him to devote more of the fleeting hour to the dog. He wandered on and on, revisiting every familiar spot, and watching the fantastic play of wind and sunshine upon the leafless trees, the mournful brook, and the

fallen leaves. He regained, after a great circuit, the mansion, and found his brother in surprise at his sudden purpose of departure. This *soi-disant* friend, this treacherous relative, urged him to postpone his departure, hoping that plans might be arranged which should bring the weight again within his reach. Persuasion was futile with one who had resolutely concentrated his energies and will to win a name and independence for himself. His trunk was soon despatched to the station, and he followed it with his brother in the family carriage. He gave one farewell glance at the estate as he was whirled past the black monster who guarded the entrance. The Arab, who had assaulted him with the knife, had been wisely kept in the background.

Chapter XLII.

For indeed, whatever be the outward form of the thing (bits of paper, as we say, and black ink), is it not verily, at bottom, the highest act of man's faculty that produces a book? It is the *Thought* of man, the true thaumaturgic virtue by which man works all things whatsoever.

CARLYLE.

"MANY works," says Chamfort, "succeed, because the mediocrity of the author's ideas exactly corresponds with the mediocrity of ideas on the part of the public." Constant Earle, familiar as he was with this recondite assertion, wrote in defiance of it in the composition of his third book. Assuming that the religion of Christ announces no mediocre ideas, advances no theories that are not consistent with the noblest and loftiest development, has promoted the welfare of men and nations, and is the only religious system that can render a nationality sublime, he wove about his leading characters the pure and chaste livery of the Man-God. Linked as the *dramatis personæ* were with the political and social agitations of his day, he exhibited them ever speaking, writing, acting from Christian principle. He had traversed the atheist gathering-places, he was familiar with their vernacular, he pitied their blindness with a sublime pity, he admitted generously their criticism of the shortcomings of those who wore the Nazarene livery; but with the iron grasp

of Menelaus he grappled the protean shape of infidelity till it reluctantly confessed the splendor of the Christian's God. He fortified his hero for the stern battle with scepticism by every historical, geological, and metaphysical research that was open to him. Inch by inch he disputed every foot of ground with the intellectual hydra. He demonstrated that the instinct of faith in God is a counterpart of the instinct of faith in the sciences. The testimony of authority must be received, always has been received, always will be received, in both religion and society. Without deference to authority in science, the affairs of every-day life would be inextricably confused and ridiculous. Men who have not the time and opportunities will and wisely trust the testimony of Newton and Descartes. It is as truly a characteristic of human nature to trust as to reason. Wisdom holds her serene way between the two. Not one man in ten thousand has the time or opportunity to measure the distances between the planets and the earth, and still the infidel, who firmly believes the astronomer, will not credit the stronger, because a million times more cumulative, evidence, of the miracles of Christ. Human nature will respect learned and scientific authority. Descartes dethroned Aristotle. Then men recognized and deferred to the new king. Christianity demands no allegiance that is not founded on careful, mature examination, such as men devote to the ordinary and interesting affairs of life. Nine-tenths of the sneers of sceptics are simply silly, derived from their undoubting trust in the scientific or historical assertions of their teachers.

Carefully pursuing his train of investigation, he demonstrated through the lips of his hero that the influence of Christianity, from the earliest ages to the present day, has been surely, persistently, prudently directed to the enfranchisement of slaves. Probing the records of the states of antiquity, he pointed triumphantly to the fact that the individuality of man was not recognized. It was everything to be a Greek — everything to be a Roman citizen. Strangers, alas, were nothing! Christianity gathered the strangers into the brotherhood of men, and crowned them sons of God. Buchanan asserts, and the world of scholars sustains him, that where Christianity does not prevail, there is a tendency to the degradation of women. Monogamy is the pure and exalted fruit of the Christian tree. Montesquieu has asserted that republics are saved by virtue, and monarchies by honor.

A nobler and more perfect analysis of the motives that actuate men will demonstrate that Christian principle preserves the wise and orderly foundations of political society, no matter how constituted.

Remembering the earnest, pleading voice of the lost Nacoochee, he attacked the false and pernicious matrimonial theories of the day. He arraigned the heresy of divorce with all the splendor of his native logic and the sublime purity and fire of his Christian soul. How universal is the truth that possession cloys and disgusts! Beauty will fade, illusions will disappear, and man, still yielding to the fancies of his ideal nature or the deadly passion of his being, will seek elsewhere for happiness, instead of loyally, nobly, and honestly living and toiling for the ties which he has assumed. How earnestly and carefully he demonstrated in his convincing pages that man, unless bound by the stern law of the State, will be ever roving in his fancies, will be satisfied with no wife, and will become more readily disgusted with that which he may drop at any moment and under the slightest anger or other passion! In this connection he flung down the gauntlet to the defenders of fiction, whose sole power is derived from portraying the misery and unlawful and unchristian dissatisfaction of married persons. He maintained that the same principle which allows divorces for uncongeniality of disposition will logically authorize laws to free parents from the support and companionship of disobedient or uncongenial children, and to allow them to discard their own offspring and to adopt strangers. He held that to maintain purity and integrity temptation must be withheld; that tranquillity of soul is best secured by the law of the State withdrawing the occasion of wandering. Make divorce crime and men will not turn so readily towards it; restrict it by the laws of God, then Christians, at least, will have courage to withstand it.

At last the carefully wrought novel was completed. It was the fruit of night labor. With the exception of a few descriptive scenes drawn from nature during the happy episode of his visit at "Sublimity," the whole book had been written after the completion of his daily employments in the lawyers' office. He had nearly completed it when he was invited away from the city. It had now received the finishing touches. The pen fell. What next? How gratifying the reflection that if no publisher would assume the hazard

of its publication he still had the means to issue it to the world! The carefully hoarded balance of the gift of the unknown was his only and great reserve. That was safe in bank. He took up a city newspaper which had been thrown aside by the lawyers who had left the office hours before. Almost the first item of intelligence which met his eye was the failure of the bank where the precious dollars were deposited. His delicate aristocratic features assumed an expression of agony which told that the noblest ambition of his manhood had been blighted. Poor, weary, helpless scholar! where should he turn now? He read the announcement of the failure again. It was, alas! too true. There was no hope of future resumption of payment. It was a complete and irretrievable failure. It seemed as if his sheet-anchor had been swept away. The chance of his being able to find a purchaser who would undertake the risk of publishing a new book was a forlorn hope indeed. Might not the fact that a new book was announced by the author who had been claimed as the writer of Polymnia, and whom the public press had generally pronounced to be a pretender, excite public attention to such an extent that a publisher would feel justified in assuming risks. At the least it was a hope, and, when he had fully considered it, he started up in enthusiasm, seized his manuscript, and, closing the door securely behind him, hastened down and out to a stage. He knew the residence of a prominent publisher could yet be reached before the hour of evening calls would be over. It was a bold and hasty step, intruding upon the most prominent and wealthy publisher in the metropolis at his home long after business hours. He was not even acquainted with the man, but his agony and despair gave wings to his speed. He found no stage where he had expected it, and hastened away to another line. He gained the desired corner. Fortunately an omnibus was just passing. He called sharply to the driver. He was heard. All right! He gained a place in the stage and rolled away. Another second and he would have lost the seat. At least ten minutes would have been lost, and he had no time to spare. Nothing but the excess of his anxiety could have prompted him to so unbusiness-like a step. But he could not wait for the morrow. His last plank was slipping beneath his feet. The night would be a watch of torture. He must know the fate of his book at once. As the stage rolled on he reflected more

calmly. He was approaching a publisher unknown to him personally, but who had the reputation of being the hardest man of his class in the metropolis. It was said by authors that he would assume no risks, that he was no judge of merit, that money always was an element in his negotiations with authors for publication, and that a poor man must never approach him; no! not if he were gifted with the brilliance and genius of a seraph. And now, in the anxiety of his poor, weary brain, and his sinking heart, Constant Earle was hastening to beard that lion in his den. Fly away, heavy, lumbering stage! augment that snail pace, weary and forlorn steeds! for one almost distracted, suffering in brain and drooping in heart, may not hold out in the honest struggle of life much longer. There is a limit beyond which such natures cannot go, may not go. The Christian firmness and the Christian trust in God alone can save them from the mad results of yielding to despair. This sheet-anchor of the struggling author Constant Earle fortunately possessed. Would not God reward him now after so long and patient a trial? Alas! it seemed as if his heroic Christian strength was doomed to bring him only disappointment. His heart failed him as he rode along. He had been precipitate in his purpose. He had better have waited until the morrow. They only can comprehend this earnest, sudden impetus, this headlong determination to know the worst, whose natures correspond with his. On, on, slowly on, rolled the heavy stage. At last it neared the expected corner. It stopped at his pull upon the leather check. He was out, away up the side street, before the door. He rung nervously. How strange his visit! Would he meet coldness, business surprise, refusal to consider his proposal at that strange hour? The door flew open. A glare of light filled the elegant residence. He was ushered in by the servant, who was deferential to the princely man before him, and amazed evidently at his huge bundle. There was an inconsistency evidently in the visitor's manner and his load. The puzzled servant scanned him from head to foot, wondering at the anomaly, — a prince with a bundle! He answered to the inquiry that his master was in and could be seen. He admitted the visitor to a parlor which was unoccupied, and went after the gentleman of the house. All was silence for a moment. Then the author heard the loud laughter of children in an inner room, and presently two

young ladies, superbly dressed, and with opera cloaks and fans in hand, glanced into the parlor in passing.

"How handsome he is!" said one to the other as they passed up the elegant stairway, never conceiving for an instant that she could be overheard from the parlor below. Presently the publisher entered. What a libel had been circulated! He was as mild and gentlemanly as a prince, looked pleasantly, but curiously, at his visitor, and said, as he received his salutation: —

"You must pardon me, sir, for keeping you waiting a moment, but I was finishing the reading of one of the most intensely interesting novels that ever fell into my hands. I seldom read such things; but so much praise has been given it by my daughter that I thought I would look into it. I was on the last page. Have you ever read it, sir? It is *Polymnia.*"

Something like the quick strokes of a miniature hammer beat upon the poor author's heart. A thrill of his former fiery, impassioned blood swept through him. Was it the *avant-coureur* of his triumph? Had the God whom he had striven to serve through all his years of struggle and mental anguish guided him in that frantic dash up the street to a man who could appreciate his talent, speak a kind word to him, take him by the hand in the midst of his struggles, and yield him that encouragement which makes such impulsive natures as his great? For the moment he could not speak. He said at length eagerly, though his voice trembled: —

"That is my book, sir; I penned every line of it. They stole it from me; but God knows it is mine. I have brought you another, and I believe a better production. I believe God will not allow this to be wrested from me. I came at this strange hour because my heart was so anxious to know my fate. Will you be kind enough to cast your eye over a few pages, and give me your judgment whether or not this book was written by the author of Polymnia?"

Who had ever looked into that full, magnificent, glittering eye of blue, and doubted him? His marvellous beauty, his urbane courtesy and winning softness, blended with his undoubted gentleness and aristocracy of birth, rendered him the cynosure of every refined circle. The publisher contemplated this former idol of the *beau monde* for an instant in silent appreciation before he replied.

"What is your name, sir?"

"Constant Earle. You must have known my father, the merchant, at least by reputation."

"I knew him personally, sir; one of the most elegant and upright gentlemen I ever met. You have done well to come to me. Your face is your passport however. You do not need his reputation to gain you a hearing from me. Now, sir, if you will allow me for a few moments to examine your manuscript, I will give you my judgment upon your question. Was your object in coming to negotiate for its publication?"

"It was."

"Very well, then; if you will be good enough to amuse yourself with books upon the table yonder, I will retire for a short time and give your manuscript a cursory examination."

In another moment Constant Earle was alone and so overwhelmed with his anticipated success that every nerve in his organization was upon the keen jump. He tried to compose himself. He had stood heroically and faced the storm. For years his nerves had been strained to their utmost tension. That fine, delicate, nervous organization, reared in luxury, had lived on husks. The keen agony of disappointment, the deprivation of refined and elegant companionship with his peers, serious apprehensions of failure and starvation, the bitterness of being an outcast from the home of his dead father, the frantic struggles of ambition with pain in his brain and the cold sneers of critics had been triumphantly trampled upon. By the aid of God and a resolute heart he had vanquished opposition, and now appreciation of his merit, inclination to help him, kind words and sympathy came so suddenly and overwhelmingly upon him, that the fountains of his heart were unsealed. Tears, rich, passionate tears of joy and exultation, sprang to his eyes. His Spartan resolution had won the victory, and it was too much for him. He listened after a time for returning footsteps. All was silence. The publisher was absorbed. Then he walked about the apartment to relieve himself of the burden of his joy, gazing intently upon every painting and decoration, as if wealth and taste were novelties. The publisher was evidently a man of cultivation, an *arbiter elegantiarum*. Books, choice, and gathered from every quarter of the literary globe, were displayed in the *salon*, and the paintings were rare, and judiciously disposed. He

paused before a striking portrait of an aged but regal personage, whose long gray beard fell upon an ermine robe, and about whose neck was suspended a massive chain of gold. A cap of velvet, with a curling white plume, surmounted the venerable head. It was the patriot Gustavus Wasa. Further on he found a painting of the fearful gorge and foaming torrent of Steenbræ. On a pedestal was a marble Cupid and Psyche, by Sergel, and, in another corner, a bust by Byström.

He was aroused from this study by approaching footsteps. Now he would know the fate of his manuscript. The publisher entered with a business air and presented him with a legal document.

"That is the best offer I can make you for your manuscript. If you accept the terms please sign your name to it."

He read the contract carefully. The offer exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

"I accept the terms, sir. You are munificent in your offer."

"That compliment is not often made to me, Mr. Earle. I am glad that you are satisfied. But, really, your book is powerfully written. Your authorship of Polymnia is there unmistakably indicated. The most careful critics will detect now the fraud which has been practised upon you; ay! as infallibly as Archimedes discovered the mixture of gold and silver in King Hiero's crown."

"And you believe that the Cave of Cheiron has within it the elements of popular success?"

"I do, Mr. Earle. The lofty moral element is more potent in this land than one would imagine from the success that greets the trashy issues of the press. You write powerfully, and your language is sweet and graceful as that of Xenophon, 'the Attic bee.'"

"And you would advise me to continue the pursuit of authorship?"

"Undoubtedly. I will give you at least as favorable terms for anything your pen will produce equal to the Cave of Cheiron."

"Shall I leave the manuscript with you?"

"Certainly. I will take care of it, and if you will come to my office to-morrow I will notify you when you may expect to receive proofs."

"Good-night, sir," extending his hand to the publisher.

"You have lifted a weight from my heart that no tongue can express. I wish for a moment I had the thirty-two hands of Siva, that I might add force to that grip."

"One Christian hand is more potent with me, Mr. Earle, than the combined fists of all the pagan gods," was the amused but hearty response. "Good-night, sir."

The street door closed between them. The restraint of self-dignity and composure was over. The pace of the exultant author was fleet in his joy. The very flags of the pavement seemed to uplift in sympathy with his elastic tread. How glorious, cheering, gorgeous, sped the stars in their orbits! Everything, from the star-lit fronts of the avenue mansions to the twinkle of the gas-lights at the corners, looked merry and cheerful. He laughed to himself the joyous, triumphant laughter of a light heart and a buoyant future. He was transformed in an instant. The sadness and bitterness of life had vanished. He surrendered himself entirely to the exultation, the *laisser-aller* of the hour. He spoke to himself, and so emphatically that pedestrians looked in amazement at him as they passed. He was intoxicated, thrilled, by the triumph of his labor and his genius.

"Ah, what a prophetess she was! My last book will indeed vindicate my authorship of Polymnia. Dear, noble girl, where are you? The cup of my triumph is not full without you. O God, crown the sweetness of this hour by a clue to that dear, noble, precious star that arose upon my despair and lighted me to victory!"

Chapter XLIII.

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert.

Byron.

Miss Delano sat in her uncle's library one evening in the autumn, reading the evening paper aloud. The Reverend Thomas Delano was comfortably ensconced in his arm-chair and enjoying the luxury of toasting his slippered feet at the coal fire. He had just returned from a merry wedding-party

and was in the best of humor, and preparing himself by a thorough absorption of caloric for the completion of his sermon for the ensuing Sunday.

"Go on," he said; "give us the headings and cream of the news. I have little time to spare — ah! what is that? Do you hear it, May? — there in the wall?"

She paused, let fall the paper and listened. A continuous whirring was heard for a moment, and then it mysteriously ceased.

"Is it possible you have never heard that sound before, uncle?"

"Certainly not. What is it?"

"You are wise as I am regarding the matter. But I have heard that sound at intervals ever since Mr. Earle took those rooms."

"What in the name of wonder is it? It sounds like the wheels of a miniature machine-shop."

"Some device of the arch-enemy, uncle, leading that man farther onward and downward in his reckless career. I believe he is cultivating some department of the black art. Mrs. Secor is firmly persuaded he is in league with Jingle-Foot. But, seriously, I have heard that peculiar sound often, and generally late at night. I cannot comprehend it. But it sounds like machinery. I have heard him moan sometimes in his sleep. I have shuddered at the sound, it resembled so much what I imagine would be the cry of a man who had committed a great crime, and whose serenity was disturbed in sleep by visions of his victim."

"You have a vivid imagination, niece."

"Perhaps so," was the quiet response. "But shall I go on now?"

"Yes, propel. I am warming up splendidly, and shall resume my pen in a minute. My sermon introduces those 'vagabond Jews, exorcists, who took upon themselves to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying,' etc. It will stimulate my imagination to think that some one of that tribe is operating within a few feet of me. There it goes again! Well, never mind. Give us the news."

The clear, sweet voice of the heiress resumed the reading of the paper. She gave her uncle the headings, and paused and turned to something else in the sheet, when he indicated his refusal to hear that column of news. Finally she reached

a matter that excited his interest, and at the word of command proceeded to give him the article at length. She finally finished the column, and was proceeding with another heading, when the street-bell sounded sharp and clear. She waited a moment to learn the cause of the interruption. A servant soon appeared with a package addressed to Miss Delano.

"What have you there, May?" inquired her uncle.

"Why, a new book!" she exclaimed. "'*Miss Delano, with compliments of the author, Constant Earle.*' Here is Mr. Earle's new book that he was telling you about, Cave of Cheiron. What does that mean? That's classical is it not?"

"Certainly, child. Have you forgotten? You used to know everything by heart from that wonderful land."

"Well, I cannot be expected to be a perfect encyclopædia."

"Very true, niece. But the Cave of Cheiron is a beautiful title for a book. It sounds like a title selected by the pen and taste of a scholiast. I tell you that Constant Earle is a promising fellow. They all speak well of that book that was stolen from him. But Cheiron, May, was the ideal instructor of the heroic age. His cave on the summit of Mount Pelion was the academy of the early Hellenic education. I suppose our author has been sitting in the entrance of that ancient grotto giving us some of his lucubrations. Very good, very good. Why, you seem to be so deep in the book already, that I expect I shall get no more newspaper out of you *this* evening."

"Pardon me, uncle. It is natural to take some interest in the books of our acquaintances. I will finish the paper, however, for you gladly."

"No! go on with Cheiron, May. I will glance over the paper myself, just for a moment. — Ah! what is this? You did not reach the literary notices. Here is Mr. Cheiron served up in elegant style. Here — read this delicate *morceau* of criticism yourself. Let me look over the book while you skim this article."

"I thought you did not approve of novels, uncle," she said, glancing up archly.

"That censure, niece, extends only to the slurs on religion and decency, for which every miserable *homunculus* of the day deems himself sent to earth with a special mission

I do not object to light literature properly handled. There may be a deal of good in it."

"Well, give me the paper. I know your sermon will make you drop it soon. At all events I shall suggest *sermon* to you every five minutes."

The clergyman laughed as he handed the paper to her. She took it eagerly enough, and read an article headed "*Cheiron redeems Polymnia.*" The criticism of the new book was a masterly production. It was lengthy, every praise or censure being carefully weighed, no extravagant epithets indulged in, everything fair, reasonable, and scholarly. But the source, ah, the source! How well she knew that able pen, the sceptre of the most profound and solid critic and editor in the metropolis! She knew what that endorsement signified. He had not even condescended to notice Polymnia when it came out. But Cheiron, the astronomer and seer in his mountain grotto, had struck through the joints of his brazen armor, the moody silence in which ephemeral literature ever found him. She looked up with a thrill of joy to her uncle, — the warm, enthusiastic pride of a woman who loves silently and hopelessly. "How grand for Mr. Earle is this criticism from this pen! *Il est immortalisé.*"

"Ah!" exclaimed her uncle, looking up from his absorption, "fine as that notice is, it does not do justice to the pure merits of this book. This young man must have been studying Sydney Smith. Do you remember those sublime words, 'The fire of our minds is like the fire which the Persians burn in the mountains, — it flames night and day, and is immortal, and not to be quenched! Upon something it *must* act and feed, — upon the pure spirit of knowledge, or upon the foul dregs of polluting passions. Therefore, when I say, in conducting your understanding, love knowledge with a great love, with a vehement love, with a love coeval with life, what do I say, but love innocence, love virtue, love purity of conduct, love that which, if you are rich and great, will sanctify the blind fortune which has made you so, and make men call it justice, — love that which, if you are poor, will render your poverty respectable, and make the proudest feel it unjust to laugh at the meanness of your fortunes'? I can plainly see, May, that this new author has been quenching his thirst at the living fountains. I bid him God-speed. I think I can appreciate and sympathize with

the emotion of Queen Margaret of France when she stooped in the presence of the astonished court and kissed the sleeping Alain Chartier, the ugliest man in the kingdom, exclaiming, 'I do not kiss the man, but the mouth that has uttered so many charming things.'"

"I do not think, uncle, that it would do to trust all women with this kiss of honor. It should be the prerogative of the queen alone."

"True," responded the clergyman. "Some of the *bien-aimés* of literary fortune might be overwhelmed. But this Earle is really brilliant; ironical as Lucian, strong as Juvenal, discriminating as Theophrastus, and witty as Horace. He is no mediocrist, I assure you."

The clergyman was deeply interested and resumed the reading of the book. His niece sat thoughtfully with the light of the coal fire on her face, and thinking of the effect that favorable criticism would produce in literary circles. Now that noble, beautiful swimmer upon the tide of life was making headway. The encouragement from such high authority would stimulate that enthusiastic nature to loftier flights of genius. The measure of his literary glory was a mere matter of time. A sadness, deep, hidden, incessant, was upon her heart. She loved him truly, earnestly, and that affection would be durable, for it was based upon respect; it would ever be secret, for she was proud and modest. It seemed so hard, that, with all her power and ardor of affection, her exuberant growth of heart, she could not develop her love by outward acts, but must sternly school herself to loneliness and desolation. Every manifestation of regard for her on his part was so palpably mere friendship. He had not been touched by the fatal arrow. He was dreaming away his life in the illusions of ambition. The sweet agony of being a woman's slave had probably never been a reality to him. Undoubtedly he craved love. Such had been his former declaration to her; but it was his natural yearning after the ideal. He was a dreamer. The love of any human creature would never satisfy him. His standard of love was too high. She alone of all the race of women-kind could respond to his ardent yearning, and she was a muzzled, silent witness of the love wanderings of his heart. She arrogated to herself all the intensity and capacity for loving that his ideal demanded. Alas! what availed the assumption! He was calm, courteous, honorable,

civil, but self-possessed, and indifferent to that secret treasure which lay in his path.

Her uncle had remarked the growing indifference of his niece to society, where she reigned supreme. The numerous attentions of gentlemen to which she was habituated were abating. It was discouraging indeed to receive in return for elegant bouquets, assiduous attentions, and entire and undivided devotion, nothing but that calm and serene courtesy of manner, that habitual flow of wit, that guarded *bienséance* of look and tone. Many gentlemen forsook her in despair. Many remained, clinging to the drowning man's straw. There is a strange necessity for love in the female heart, but in all true, desirable hearts it is ever subservient to that judgment which pronounces marriage a mockery that does not involve the soul. She had ever cherished the extreme idealism of love, and now that she had shipwrecked her heart upon the unfriendly shore, she experienced *dégoût* at the advances gentlemen made to her. When the revel or the call was over, with feelings of relief she acknowledged the sweetness of her lonely room. She enjoyed the society of Miss Deming more since that young lady had given up hope of winning Constant Earle. That lively, sweet, gentle girl had not loved profoundly. She had been fascinated, like scores of girls before her, by his beauty, gentleness, and talent. She had subsided into the state of simple admiration, and had gone after strange idols. Miss Delano was not called upon for advice in that quarter again. Hence the intimacy was upon pleasant footing once more. Society had again volunteered its opinion that the heiress was still at a loss to find a suitable object for her lofty ambition. One of such royal expectations must expect to drift sometimes into the stormless sea of old-maidism. And yet she had not attained the age of one score and four, and was as brilliant and elastic as a sylph. There were gentlemen in her train who would gladly have taken her at thirty; men who had wisely discarded the old prejudice that fascination ceases with a girl's teens. The intellectual era refuses to admit a girl's diploma under twenty. The intellectual development of women, and the recognition of its necessity, has swept old-maidism far off under the shadows of forty. The mere discussion of the idea of a more comprehensive mental culture for women has given men a stronger insight and keener relish for life-partners who have brains.

pretty face that fades beside a husband at thirty has given place to a sublime and cultured soul, that rises upon his evenings a star ever increasing in brilliancy and power to cheer. Young-maidism and mere physical beauty received a terrible check when the age resolved to admit female intellect into the world's arena.

After a long reverie, Miss Delano, finding that her uncle was still absorbed in the Cave of Cheiron, quietly glided from the library, and sought her own room. She longed to give way to that flood of passion and hopelessness which surged upon her heart. Reserved in the presence of others, her self-possession gave way in solitude. She flung herself upon her bed, and wept bitterly, that long, helpless, wearying sobbing which yields no relief; that continues through the night, when the moon looks coldly in; that weeps on when the solemn clock in the tower tolls midnight, and startles the mourner to her feet, that she may kneel and forget not the duty to Him who does all things well. Helplessly she bowed before Him in entreaty, in sobbing, in agonized prayer. He had promised to bind up every broken and heavily laden heart, to pour the oil of joy and consolation into every hopeless soul that knelt to him. She pleaded earnestly that she might be reconciled to her lonely fate; that this overwhelming passion might not obscure her worship of the Man of Sorrows, the thorn-crowned Saviour of the world. She begged for light to guide her, for a revelation which should teach her where to concentrate her energies and her resources for the honor of God, of his church, of his poor. "Take all that I am, all that I possess, but give me only *peace* once more." She arose from her knees, and passed to the window; the moon was pale and beautiful, but cold. She pressed her face to the chill glass and peered forth. The agony and the desolation of heart returned; she sobbed bitterly again, shivering in her utter hopelessness. That spiritual beauty of the author's face passed before her again, and she bowed her head upon the window, and shook nervously in her anguish. "God comes not near me. I plead in vain. He will not cast down the idol which I have reared, and which my poor human nature refuses to dethrone. I cannot forget you, O pure and beautiful dream! Every generous and pure instinct of my heart goes forth to you, reaches forth to you. I cannot forget you. You pass before me crowned and radiant in your wonderful beauty and

your glorious genius. I love you, oh, so madly, so frantically! You are ever before me. My heart yearns after you when I stand so calmly before you, and when you are gone I am burdened with desolation that God will not lighten."

She shook off this exhausting frenzy, this weeping which seemed to draw blood in its course, and, washing the traces from her face, knelt down again before a picture of the "Ecce Homo" and clasped her hands before the agony of the Thorn-Crowned. The very thought of the suffering and anguish of that blood-stained Saviour melted her. "Sanctify this agony of mine to thine honor and glory, O my Master, for it is greater than I can bear." She leaned her beautiful forehead upon the table and sobbed more bitterly than before. A storm of despair and hope deferred, and a yearning tenderness which tongue may not speak, and no understanding comprehend, save those that have suffered the agony of unrequited love, swept over her. Her fingers clinched in her nervousness, and the proud, beautiful queen of the *élite* moaned as a lost soul.

"So passes the wild, beautiful, first-love of my life. That of which I have read and dreamed is my fate at last. Oh, I could love you, do love you, with a love passing the love of woman! No heart ever loved like mine. The idol rises higher and higher towards heaven with every breath I draw. Everything that is pure and beautiful bursts forth at the mention of your name. Ah! for one word of gentleness from you I would face torture. That love which you will lavish upon another, one drop of it would nourish my heart, my poor, weary, yearning, bleeding heart. O merciful God! help me. I am thy child. I am marked with thy cross. I will follow thee without a murmur. Strengthen me, for I am so weak in the presence of this idol which steals my reason, my faith, my hope of immortal happiness and peace. Ah! *peace*, I shall never know it again!"

She struggled with herself again and conquered. She sat down by the table, and, spreading her Bible before her, bent over it in study. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying: Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed

The fair and lovely mourner drank in the heavenly inspiration like a draught from the river of life in the eternal city. She wept at the soothing words, and then calmly committed her soul with its passions to the Eternal Hand. She prayed earnestly for the fair, royal man who had stolen her peace, and she prayed for that sense of duty which should cause an upright, patient life, patient and pure unto the end. She slept at last when the cold moon had passed away, and in her dream she was walking beside the great white throne of the hereafter, and at her side was a face spiritualized and smiling tenderly upon her, which had first awakened love in her heart in the regions of time.

At last, in the midst of this heavenly vision which seemed to have been sent her in answer to her prayer for peace, for strength to endure and suffer through this mortal life, a sudden jar seemed to rend the golden pavements of the celestial city beneath her feet. A terrific earthquake opened before her, and all was darkness. In the violence of the shock she awoke. Her room was dark, and she started up in her bed. Could a dream have caused so sudden and violent a horror? She slept again when the first terror of the concussion had passed away. In the morning she awakened to a clear and beautiful day. The heart-yearning remained, but she had been strengthened for the struggle, and, resolute upon a new and loftier career of virtue, she dressed herself and descended to the parlor for the morning family-prayers. At the breakfast-table her uncle remarked: —

"I dreamed last night of a terrible earthquake, and so powerful was the shock to my nerves that I awoke. I fancied for an instant that I could hear groans of human agony. How strange is the phenomenon of sleep!"

"Extraordinary indeed!" exclaimed his niece, "that both of us should be aroused by the same dream. I thought a cannon might have been fired under my window."

"But I was sitting up in bed," said her uncle, "and looking about for the cause of the disturbance when a groan seemed to come up through the parlor ceiling. I called, but received no answer, and then, concluding that I had overtaxed my nerves by late study, turned over and dropped asleep again."

The memory of this conversation recurred to the two at a later period.

Chapter XLIV.

How narrow limits were to Wisdom given!
Earth she surveys; she thence would measure Heaven:
Through mists obscure now wings her tedious way;
Now wanders dazzled with too bright a day.

Prior.

The author sat in his new lodging-room at a table with the brazen antique before him. His new quarters were pleasant and comfortable, and the first luxuries in which he indulged himself upon his literary success were arranged on shelves near at hand, — the friends of adversity, the consolers of lonely hours, the ever-constant companions, books. Experience had been a prudent counsellor. He was hoarding the income from his successful novel. He was only extravagant in books, those mines of thought from which future literary success should be wrought. The mother's gift was receiving careful scrutiny. A brazen weight, a simple gold ring, a Bible, were his heirlooms. One family relic beside had been secured to him by his brother's offer, while he was domiciled at "Silvicola." From all the family curiosities which had been laid before him he had made a singular selection, — an old ivory-handled, iron-pointed, silk umbrella of his deceased grandfather. He had reasoned, when the family display was revealed to him, that an ancient and massive bureau, rich and quaint, would be very pleasant to have ever in sight, as would several other antiquities of the Earles, that he might have chosen. But he had then no place to put it. The floor of the law-office was his lodging. In any event it would be out of keeping with his fallen condition to have so valuable and bulky an article of furniture about him. What would be most serviceable for a student, a toiler for bread? With a laugh he had chosen the huge umbrella. If matters came to the worst, it would be a perfect tent for him. No trivial, dainty, scanty shelter against rain did the forefathers carry. They raised against the stormy skies the ægis of an enormous dome of cloth. The foundations of their umbrellas were firm and durable. They were made to endure, to protect, to disguise, to transmit to posterity. An earnest scion of the brave old stock had honored the memory of the ancients, and flown to the shelter of

the durable fabric, as Noah to the ark. The venerable heir loom rewarded his preference by piloting him through fearful rains, safe and dry, when pedestrians beside him saved only their heads and shoulders, and sacrificed their feet and legs on the altar of fashion. The folded wonder of antiquity was an admirable staff when closed; ay, more, a Hercules club for defence in an unequal assault. Heavy and vast as it was, he was gradually becoming attached to it. It was so reliable. He had thus far encountered no wind that could turn it. It was solid and substantial, and ready for storms, gales, wrecks, like the forefathers. It now stood grim and patient at the post to which the author had assigned it beside his bookcase.

But the antique from Salamis; ay, the weight. He was puzzling himself over it. The drowsy night of the opiate was passing before his memory. Its scenes were perfect pictures until the instant before he had fallen under the influence of the drugged leaves. The last consciousness was distinct before him. The talismanic writing was photographed upon his brain: "*The hieroglyphics on the brass are unquestionably solved by studying the symbols of the gods and goddesses.*"

The equilateral triangle, the first of the signs on the periphery, was an enigma. It would have baffled Œdipus, flushed from his triumph over the Theban Sphinx, to explain it. It stood apart from the line of hieroglyphics; so the author concluded to leave it and go on with the others. The next in order was a bow. This he named *Apollo*. The zigzag lightning he assumed was the divine anger typified by *Nemesis*. Then followed a hunting-spear, which he named *Orthia*, a surname of Diana. Then followed an arch, which he conceived to be the rainbow of *Iris*. The next symbol, a cup, he marked down for *Ganymedes*, the cup-bearer of Jupiter. The next figure was a torch. This could be nothing but *Eos*, goddess of the dawn. Now for the test. If the first letter of each proper name thus obtained would together with the others give a plausible word in Greek, the language of Solon, he would continue, feel justified in continuing, to apply this solution to the remaining symbols in the circle. He placed them in a line, thus: *Apollo*, *Nemesis*, *Orthia*, *Iris*, *Ganymedes*, *Eos*, and found the resulting word to be *Anoige*. Then he wrote it in Greek, thus, Ανοιγε, which translated signifies *Open*. This was plausible. He

resumed the examination of the symbols in the next group, then the next, the next, and so on to the end, selecting the first letter of every name of god or goddess, and combining it with the others into Greek words as before. Then the whole line was written out in Greek thus: *Ανοιγε την ὕλην ἵν' ἐξέλδω*, (*Open the forest that I may come out.*)

He sat then puzzling over this strange result, "*Open the forest that I may come out.*" What in the name of mystery could that mean? What forest? Who was to come out? He buried his hands in his hair and bent over the paper. Some mystic meaning must attach to the word *forest*. Is not a forest itself a mystery? One approaches its unknown depths with caution and awe. A cave black and gloomy is a mystery, why not, then, a forest, dark, difficult, filled with hidden recesses, lairs of wild beasts, shadows, gloom? Perhaps the word forest was a substitute for mystery. Then the sentence would read, "Open the *mystery* that I may come out." How provoking! That was the very purpose upon which he was bent, *opening the mystery*. How should he open it? His anxiety grew fearful. He paced up and down his room. "Open the mystery, open the mystery," he muttered, striding back and forth like one in frenzy. He paused in his fierce tramp, and sat down over the weight again. "Brazen voice, speak! What shall I open?" Solon and his Egyptian friends were scattered dust. How could they speak? Inanimate brass had no tongue. Why not? Had it? Where was it? He grappled the weight in the intensity of his curiosity; his eye ran over every line, curve, and angle, of the symbol and figures. His attention became riveted at length upon his imaginary Solon, standing on the island of Salamis, pointing forward with one hand, and downward with the other. His first supposition returned to him. The pointing must mean *Σοφία*, *wisdom*, *knowledge* THERE, *down there at his feet*, will lead men *there*, away across the ocean to Atlantis, the Atlantic Isle, "*with the great continent beyond*," *America*. *There!* what does that mean? *There*, wisdom *there* — A flash of light came to him. Perhaps wisdom *there*, that is, at Solon's feet, was in the brass, *in the inside of the brass*. Great Jupiter! perhaps the brass had an inside. He looked at it earnestly. Not a line betrayed to him an opening. The periphery of the brass had several grooves in it. Who would dare to say that one of those grooves might not conceal a joint? He fired at

the thought, grasped the weight and his hat, and ran away to a machine-shop.

When he gained his destination he was nearly out of breath, so excited had he become. He pushed open the door, and entered the home of machinery, clashing, roaring, confusion and din.

"Be kind enough," he said, addressing a machinist, "to put that in your vise for an instant, and give it a wrench open. Please be careful and not harm the miniature on this side — here — see?"

"My friend," said the machinist, after a brief inspection of the brass, "that thing won't open, — don't you see it's solid."

"Never mind; you just try."

The man smiled incredulously, and, placing the brass in the vise, tightened it, and applied his wrench to it. The brass had been fashioned more than two thousand years before. But at that Herculean application of force, it slowly yielded, — unscrewed, and, to the utter amazement of both *slowly opened*. The perseverance and will of the scholar had triumphed. The voice of antiquity was about to open its brazen deathless lips. What agonizing suspense! The brass came apart, *disclosing a recess closely packed with thin plates of gold, lying one upon another, and glittering like the plated front of the ancient Jewish Temple in the flash of the morning sun*. Nations, kingdoms, empires, had crumbled into dust, and were misty as fables, and the little brass had survived them all, and offered once more to the sun's rays its precious deposit, its treasury of thin golden records. Every plate was carefully engraved with tiny symbols, and was as fresh, as untarnished, as when the great lawgiver and sage hid them all away.

Eagerly the owner scanned them one by one, as they were removed from the brass. Then anxiously he gathered them all together, and, giving the machinist his fee, hurried away to his room. He cleared his table for the task before him, and spread the golden plates upon it in the order of their discovery. They were twelve in number, and he soon discovered that the character of the writing upon them was the same as on the periphery of the brass. His knowledge of theogony enabled him finally to decipher the meaning of all the plates. He toiled hours at this task, delayed at times by selecting the wrong deity, when two of the gods possessed

the same symbol. Finally, however, he was satisfied the interpretation was correct. He wrote upon a sheet of paper the several interpretations as he took them from the plates and read the final result, thus: —

"Ogyges, king of Athens and Thebes, alone escaped with his family, when Greece was covered with water. He was beloved of the gods. Their fury harmed him not. His boat floated upon the flood, and Jupiter was pilot. The whole earth was one great sea. Far in the West was a great king, the brother of Ogyges. Knowledge of the stars and their orbits, of the times and seasons, of many books of the ancients, gave him the power of prophecy. He foretold the rain, the eclipse of the sun and the moon. He foretold the coming of the great flood. But he defied the gods. 'Brother,' he said, 'follow the counsels of the avenging deities; float upon the huge sea, with your kindred, as they direct. As for me I am a sage. I know the language of the heavenly bodies. I know the secrets of the earth; there will I hide myself; deep in the *Great Cave* of the West. I will descend deep into the earth, and laugh at the storm. While idle hands drift upon the flood, I will delve into the secrets of the earth, and heap up treasures. Farewell.'

"Are the gods powerless? No! Human wisdom is short. The gods alone are eternal. The Western king, gathering his treasures, sought the bowels of the earth. He closed the mouth of the *Great Cave*. He fortified himself at great depths. He hid in the *Great Pit*. He died not by water; the gods destroyed him by fire. His treasures what man shall number? They lie deep in the *Great Pit*, in the *Great Cave*. Who shall dare to seek the gold and the jewels which Pluto guards?"

The scholar sat bewildered for a moment. Then his Spartan will burst forth in words.

"I fear only the King of kings and Lord of lords. I will beard the false Pluto in his retreat. I will hazard the descent into the Great Pit. Solon was the light of his age. I will fathom this mystery."

So firmly had he become impressed from his investigations that the Western Hemisphere had been peopled from the earliest ages; that an antediluvian nationality had grown up in America; that the general deluge found an advanced civilization, gorgeous temples, arts, refinements, wealth in the Western World, — that he had been prepared for any such

announcement from the brass. Could there be any further doubt that the *Great Cave* of Solon was the Mammoth Cave, the wonder of the Western World, that great subterranean palace *nine* miles in extent, whose marvellous arches and domes yield to the flaming torches of its explorers almost fabulous magnificence and beauty, and whose hermetically sealed floors have preserved the bones of lost nations as perfectly as the dry atmosphere of the Egyptian mummy-pits? He had never visited the great cavern of Kentucky. Now he had a double motive for that visit: curiosity to witness the marvels which had thrilled the vision of others, and a wild, adventurous daring to fathom that which no eye of the present generation has ever looked upon, the fearful depths of "*The Bottomless Pit.*" He was a fearless soul, and no sooner had the idea of sounding those gloom-shrouded mysteries suggested itself than he adopted it and proceeded to put it in execution. He was a freeman once again. His book was a great success. Pecuniary embarrassment had left him. Change of scene had been suggested by a physician. It was desirable that he should not tax his brain by fresh literary labors until that delicate organ had enjoyed a period of rest. He must change the tenor of his thought.

One great anxiety haunted him. In this hour of his prosperity he could find no Nacoochee to share his joy. Hopelessly throwing away money in advertisements had ceased. She must have left the city. No doubt her talents had been recognized by some family from the country. Her eye, perhaps, never ranged now through a city paper. His earnest calls through the public press had been wasted. How desolate and lonely he was at times for the sound of that dear voice! Perhaps she was married; perhaps *dead*. At that solemn thought he bowed his head upon his hands and moaned. With the undying devotion of a Sabean he worshipped his Evening Star. He dreamed of her, idealized her, longed to take that poor, muffled head and face upon his shoulder, and tell her that he loved her soul, that her marred beauty was dearer to him than the spotless countenance of the loveliest city belle. Now that beauty honored his genius, now that the elegant and graceful were glad at every turn to do him reverence, now that praise and adulation were his daily portion, now that beautiful eyes looked after him all they dared and propriety allowed, — he valued them not. His whole soul was absorbed in the memory of the graceful, gifted scholar who had cheered him and

pointed heavenward when he was about to fall. How a great passion founded on respect eclipses the love which is born of physical beauty and social position! His earnest, poetic nature had placed upon the shrine of love a true idol. With such a nature as his, forgetfulness, inconstancy, seemed impossibilities. If there was one girl on the broad earth Constant Earle could *love* it was his lost Spanish scholar. If there was one whose beauty, elegance, loveliness, accomplishments, *esprit*, piety, brilliance, could arouse his intensity of *friendship*, that girl was May Delano. He thought of the heiress more frequently than she dreamed of. When he was in her society he was fascinated and lingered. She detected it with a woman's instinct. But it gave her no hope. He admired her with the warm regard of a friend, no doubt. And yet, strange as it may appear, with all his passion for Nacoochee, he was conscious of a mysterious fascination in the presence of the heiress. On the occasion of his last visit to her to regain possession of the weight, he had conversed long and earnestly with her, had left reluctantly, and then during his walk homeward had found himself murmuring, "Dear Evening Star, I would to God you were as happy, as physically spotless, as completely environed by elegant comforts, as that sweet girl." Had any one informed him that he was in a dilemma between two gifted girls, he would have indignantly denied the charge and vindicated his love for the lost Nacoochee. To his firm soul there was treason in the idea that The Evening Star was not omnipotent in her fascination. He would have offered her his hand on the instant of meeting, so frantic was he to possess her, to call her his wife; so eager was his hungry heart for love, such love as that girl could give him, if she would.

At length in his distress to win her, which augmented day by day the longer she was absent from him, he resolved to go to his sister and fulfil the promise he had made when she had warned him against entangling his heart with a poor girl of humble life like his Spanish scholar. He laid aside the weight and its contents, and made his way to her humble abode, which he had made as comfortable for her as his present means would justify. He had induced her to abandon the bookbindery and rely for the future upon the proceeds of his pen. His heart had warmed towards her now that he knew she was a mother and so unhappily situated

by her promises to her lost husband. Thus far every effort to trace Robert Melville had proved unsuccessful.

He found his sister at home, and soon communicated the object of his visit.

"I promised you, Lou, that when I felt myself to be really and earnestly in love, I would tell you. The hour for the fulfilment of that promise has come."

"Brother, I think I can point unerringly to the fortunate girl who has stolen your heart."

"I doubt it, Lou, unless you have gained some occult power from the study of Morin's 'Astrologia Gallica.' I trust you have not been wasting the funds upon that work that Queen Maria de Gonzaga fooled away."

"Look in my eyes, brother," she replied, taking his arm in her pure white hand, and facing him. "No *arriére pensée* now; you love a lady on Fifth Avenue."

"I deny it, Lou."

"Then I am disappointed," she replied, with evident pique. "But you came to make the confession; out with it; you need not doubt my sympathy. Who has gained that mysterious temple, your *cor cordium?*"

"I fear, Lou, that I shall not have sympathy."

"Strange apprehension, Constant. Of course you could love no one who is not a *lady*."

Privation and poverty had not shaken the caste prejudices of that proud, beautiful patrician. She lifted her superb head as she spoke. The movement reminded him of May Delano, when she had expressed her appreciation of some woman's conduct and the class she represented by the pointed epithet "*canaille*."

Constant Earle was staggered for an instant. He was not unconscious of the demands of that blood which flowed in his veins. A gentleman who has once been born to the belief that descent from a refined, educated, cultured ancestry divides him from the dregs of the human family in some way, and to some extent, never entirely divests himself of the consciousness that there are matrimonial alliances which are not decorous. There are men who loudly proclaim equality, sneer at blood and education, who nevertheless would cut off their right hand sooner than contract marriage with an innocent, industrious Irish emigrant girl, fresh from the ship. They have the unadulterated sentiment of caste. If any class of adjectives are rampant in the human mind, they

as *good*, *better*, *best*. The brother, after a moment's silence during which he steadily regarded the proud, beautiful woman before him, said, calmly, "Lou, do you *believe* that your own example has justified you in making that remark to me?"

"I do, indeed," she answered, earnestly. "I married a *gentleman*, one whose conversation, antecedents, manners, family, would justify any family-circle in receiving him. I would not have dared to desecrate the memory and the refined sentiments of those who have been buried by marrying a person of vulgar birth. I could not have looked my brothers in the face had I been so derelict. If there is one word that education and refinement teaches, it is *propriety*."

"Sister," was the response husky with emotion, "I was about to inform you of a love which is, and shall be, the only love of my life. In the face of what you have recalled to me, the memory of the dead, I can never marry. I have utterly and forever given my heart away to one whom I will not sit here and hear you comment upon. But marry her I never will until you shall admit that she is a proper custodian of my name and honor. It is dishonorable to marry one that the soul does not love. It is not dishonorable to cherish a secret and unavowed love for one that I cannot marry."

"Constant, I pity you from the bottom of my soul. I rely upon your word entirely. Speak no more of this, for it pains you. The instincts of your class should have saved you. Alas! this world is naught but agony and despair."

Chapter XLV.

Right through the temple of the spacious cave
He went with soft, light feet — as if his tread
Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave.

SHELLEY.

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled a merry voice, as its owner came tramping over the fallen leaves, and making his way through a thicket of trees and vines down into a romantic

and beautiful dell; "I reckon, Massa Earle, you's calculatin' to camp out in dar?"

"What's the matter, Stephen? Anything wrong about my rig?" inquired the person addressed, looking up from his study of the golden hue of the fallen leaves of the coffee-tree, the lighter yellow of the leaves of the tree of heaven, and the contrasting brown of the beech, and the blood-red of the vine-leaves which were scattered through them.

"What you goin' to do with dat ar' umbreller, Massa Earle? I 'spects it's a kind of tent, — aint it? It's no count here. I neber seed it rain in dar."

"Why, that's my walking-stick. When it rains, I'm all right. When it's dry, I poke around in the rocks with that iron end; when the mosquitoes come too thick, I flap it at 'em. That's my *multum in parvo*. Why, bless your soul, I'd be lost without that old friend."

"Massa Earle, I's quite familiar with de technological expressions of de scientific gentlemen dat frequents dis 'ar cave. But my observations nebber embraced '*multer in parvo*.' Would it derogate from your convenience to elucerdate dat 'ar technology?"

"That's simple enough, Stephen. It means much in a little."

"Obviously, Massa Earle. I's under obligations fur dis elucerdation. But allow me to remark, *en passant*, dat dat 'ar umbrellar'll be in your way. You see you've got to carry dis lamp, and den your geologicus hammer, and between de two you'll hab your hands full. I'll communicate de fact, massa, dat you've got some tall trabbellin' to do afore you quit dat 'ar cave. It's one of de *progidies* of nature."

"I can't dispense with my umbrella, — that's certain," replied Constant Earle. "Here, this is what I'll do Give me that piece of twine on your lamp and I'll swing the hammer around my waist. You are sure the windlass and ropes are in there all right?"

"Jest as sure as an axiom, massa, for I seed 'em go in."

"And you kept dark about their destination?"

"I did indeed. I's allers silent in de interest of scientific and geologicus discobbery. I keep my word, massa."

"Very well, take the lead. I'm all ready now."

The aged mulatto, who was a famous guide through the dangerous and devious passes of the subterranean wonder, moved on at the word of command, bearing his staff with a

metallic lamp at the end of it. The author followed with a similar lamp, and with his ancestral umbrella. The geological hammer was likely to prove an inconvenience to him, but he was reconciled to this additional weight when he recognized the huge bag of provisions slung over the back of the guide. Stephen's pack contained also fireworks for the illumination of the loftier portions of the cave. The path led down through a dell, which in summer-time is shaded by a forest of trees and grape-vines. They passed the ruins of saltpetre-furnaces, anciently supplied with material from excavations within the cave; then mounds of ashes were seen, and finally they turned sharply to the right. At this instant a blast of chilly air reached them, and they beheld the mouth of the cave before them, black and gloomy as the entrance to the fabled Tartarus. There were rude steps leading down some twenty or thirty feet into the yawning blackness, and, as Constant Earle glanced backward and around him in his descent, he saw that darkness and horror were rapidly enveloping him. The lamp of the guide began to reveal its essential service. In a few seconds more it became an absolute necessity. The explorers were wrapped in profound darkness, their lamps faintly conquering a wreath of space from the interminable horror about them. On, on, on, into the fearful and unknown gloom, pressed the author, following the lamp of his guide. They had traversed a narrow hall, and continuing downward emerged at length into the *antechamber* of the cave. This mere preparatory apartment was two hundred feet long, one hundred and sixty feet wide, and with a level roof perfectly smoothed by nature, and sixty feet in height. Gradually the eye grew familiar with the gloom, but could not detect the walls and roof, as the lamps were held aloft. The guide kindled a large fire, which brilliantly lit up the scene. This antechamber had two passages opening into it, each a hundred feet wide. They entered it at right angles to each other. They extended onward more than five hundred feet each; and all having a common flat roof gave the effect of an enormous hall or gigantic temple shaped like the letter L. The guide informed him that the passage on the right had been called "Audubon Avenue." The passage straight ahead was to be the line of their advance, being the *commencement* of the great cave itself. Not a column of any kind aided in the support of the roof of the antechamber, which was an immense level rock,

smooth as if cut by instruments of sculpture. It was ornamented by nature with a wide cornice in panel-work, wonderfully accurate and regular. Huge skeletons of some ancient race of men have been excavated from the floor of this vast vestibule. A scientific gentleman from New York, a few years ago, saw a mummy taken from a vault in the cave, which was found in a sitting posture, and was a female five feet and ten inches in height. She was found with all her wardrobe in perfect preservation, her body shrunk, but the skin perfect and entire and may have lain there for ages, so perfectly does the dry air of the cave preserve everything that is placed in it. The flesh was hard and dry, firmly knit to the bone. There were magnificent head-dresses of towering plumes in her vault, seven in number. She wore a necklace of ıed hoofs of fawns. Needles of bone were in her grave. She was wrapped in deer-skins, which were elegantly imprinted with figures of white vines and leaves. She had the features of a tall, handsome American woman; her *forehead* was eminently intellectual.

Not a sound was heard when they had withdrawn from the crackling of the fire to realize the solemnity and grandeur of the temple. A silence gloomy, fearful, held sway in this vast charnel-house of the ages. Familiarized with the idea of ancient American nationalities as the author had become from the investigation of innumerable authorities and the evidence of material temples and sculptures, he was to some extent prepared for the overwhelming power of this vast sepulchral scene. Far above him swept away the dark line of the mausoleum's roof. In the distance a strange gloom gathered and waited for his advance; on every side was distance and doubt, and beneath his feet slumbered the dead; men that may have been old as the mummies of Egypt, so devoid is the place of the elements which produce decay, heat and moisture. Here was a subterranean temple suggestive of the horrible Mithraic rites, whose priests sought caves to sacrifice their human victims. Here may have rolled the voices of Scandinavian hierarchs, offering their mutilated prisoners to the gods of Walhalla. Screams of terror and agony may have echoed through this mammoth vault from heroes who quailed not in the fierce shock of battle. Up to the lofty summit of the stone Sacrificatorio of Central America the priests carried their naked victim before the assembled multitudes, and extending him upon the

altar held him firmly, until the chief priest with a flint cut open his breast, tore out his palpitating heart, and held it aloft in offering to the sun. His dying eyes at least could look upon the light of his God before they closed forever. But the inhuman rites which sought the caverns suggested an abandonment of humanity, which thrills the finest fibres of nervous torture in the Christian heart, and renews the adoration of that Saviour who inaugurated a reign of gentleness, kindness, peace.

But this was only the *vestibule* of the cave. At the word of command the guide advanced to the grand gallery or main cavern. The tunnel before them extended on, on, and still on, for many miles, now retaining for great distances its average width and height of fifty feet, then slowly curving downwards into a *chapel* seventy feet in height and nearly one hundred feet in width, the pulpit of rock, and the organ-loft behind it, apparently as perfectly fashioned as if the chisel of man had wrought them. A thousand persons could comfortably find accommodation in this church. Passing onward they came to a point where looking upward they beheld a gallery sweeping across their way and connecting a cave on the right and above them with another cave on the left and above them. The guide mentioned that mummies well preserved had been found in these upper caves. In one of them was seen a pool of jet-black water; in another was a ceiling smooth and white as marble. Near to the latter was the Gothic Chapel, eighty feet long and fifty feet wide. Stalagmite columns of cream-colored rock and of gigantic size nearly closed up the ends of the church. Away down the nave swept two rows of small and graceful columns formed of the same cream-colored stalagmites and stalactites, and when the guide built fires at several points and the illumination revealed the sublimity and gorgeousness of the architecture, the author felt a thrill of rapture and delight which he had never known in the exquisite basilicas of Europe. The crystals of the stalactite formations flung out so dazzling and glorious a scene of religious architecture, graceful and fairy-like in the slender pendants of the vaulted roof, the artificial chandeliers, and the semblances to saints and angels behind the altar, that for a moment he fancied the heavenly illusions of a dream were upon him, and he beheld a temple of the hereafter in keeping with the great white throne of God.

Then the guide pointed out to him a great stalagmite column, in which was a natural seat, large and comfortable, named The Devil's Arm-Chair. At the foot of the chair was a pool of sulphur-water. Continuing still along the Gothic Avenue, on which stood the exquisite chapel that had fascinated him, he found a pool of crystal water into which the supplying stream fell in a miniature cascade from the roof of the cave. Passing a huge rock, which nearly blocked up their way, they reached Napoleon's Dome, then the Crystal Pool, a miniature lake, and then Annett's Dome, a spot of wonderful beauty and exquisite creamy stalactite formations. A cascade fell from the ceiling of this dome, which glistened like silver in the flash of the lamps, and then wandered away into a great pit called the Cistern, full of water at all times.

Leaving, reluctantly, the wonders of these upper caves, they descended to the main cave by a flight of rocky steps, and, resuming their onward march, once more entered the Ballroom. The cave at this point stretched away before them smooth, wide, and clear of all obstructions for several hundred feet. Here was an orchestra, twelve feet in height, that could seat a hundred musicians. Honored by the presence of the *beau sexe*, brilliantly illuminated and properly and evenly floored, this would be the most magnificent assembly-room within the limits of earth. Onward they passed to Willie's Spring, flowing from a fluted column in the wall, and then discovered before them a huge rock named the Giant's Coffin from its perfect formation. They were now in the region of the beautiful stalactite and stalagmite formations on the walls, which gave in cream-color, gray, or snowy white, the images, in relief, of every bird and beast that haunts the earth, and every flower that raises its beautiful head from the tropics to the poles. Here the author discovered the sacred lotus of India and Egypt, the representations of which, on the monuments of Palenque, convince many *savans* that those wonderful ruins are of East Indian origin. At every step the exquisite enchantment of the scene was augmenting. Soon the Great Bend was reached, where, with a tremendous curve, the tunnel changed its course, and immediately after resumed its former direction. Then with eager steps the author followed Stephen into the Star Chamber. Far away above him was arched the semblance of the firmament. Stars glimmered softly in their

stalactite beds, and a comet, with long, luminous tail, startled by its marvellous likeness to reality. On and still on they pressed, kneeling to crawl through Proud Man's Misery, and standing erect at length in the Solitary Cave, and then pushing onward to the Fairy Grotto. Here the fantastic variations of the white stalactites and stalagmites had given the shapes of fluted columns, vast forests of branch coral, seats and flowers of white shells, nymphs balancing upon one foot on the point of uplifting stalagmites, and shrubs and miniature trees with branches pointed with rock crystal. Constant Earle seated himself upon a shell which had recalled the idea of a huge fairy-boat, and revelled in the ideal beauty of the scene. At every motion of the lamps some new and exquisite creation of snow-white loveliness appeared. The enchantress of the cave had here established her boudoir. Thrilled, overwhelmed, by the intense loveliness and purity of the spot, his poetic nature brought the tears of exultation to his eyes. Every nerve in his being acknowledged the exquisite beauty and sweetness of God's gentle touch. "Ah! Nacoochee," he murmured, "could you sit beside me at this instant, and drink in this divine gentleness and delicacy of our Father's power, I could die here. Oh, 'if there be an Elysium on earth it is this, it is this!'"

He was interrupted in his dreamy reverie by the voice of the tall mulatto, who was standing apart with uplifted torch, and forming a striking contrast to the fairy vision.

"I muss interrupt you, Massa Earle, *sans façon*. Dar's a heap of trabbellin' afore us yet."

"Why, Stephen," exclaimed the author, rising at the call, "you're a French scholar. You speak admirably."

The mulatto was delighted. He prided himself upon the terms he had picked up from visitors, above everything on earth. He vowed internally that Massa Earle was the most elegant gentleman he had ever encountered. If there was one compliment he valued above another from mortal man, it was recognition of his fragmentary erudition. He stood at least an inch taller at the words, gave his felt hat a touch of acknowledgment, flung his torch aloft, and moved proudly onward, ejaculating, "I's seed a heap of gentlemen inspectin' dis cabbern in my day. But, Massa Earle, you hab de mose *distingué* air ob de hole crowd." With this safety-valve of his overcharged and grateful heart, he pro

ceeded to point out new wonders and communicate their names.

After leaving the Fairy Grotto, they re-entered the main cave at a point called the Cataract, where their torches revealed the foaming and tumbling current of some unknown stream. Immediately after they reached The Temple, an unbroken chamber which covered two acres of ground, and over it was spread a single dome of rock. This superb cavern alone was larger than the cave of Staffa. The height of the dome was one hundred and twenty-five feet. The domes of the largest basilicas of Europe appear tame beside a magnificent sweep of solid rock overarching two acres of space. They examined this superb subterranean temple by the glare of many fires which they kindled in every direction. The consciousness of being beneath the earth and viewing such a triumph of natural architecture was almost appalling. An accident to their supply of lighting materials would have found them miles away from the mouth of the cave, enveloped in a darkness from which nothing could ever rescue them, save the accidental arrival of a new party with lights and guides, which was not likely to occur at that late season of the year. So environed were they by immense pits that advance or retreat in any direction without lights would be certain destruction. No ray of light had ever been known to enter the Mammoth Cave save by the narrow entrance now miles away. On every side were winding avenues which had never been explored. Doubt, danger, horror, envelop at once the guide who undertakes new exploration. Their course was onward, until they should have visited the *nine miles* of cave which the guide was familiar with.

They examined the Bowl, a chamber one hundred feet in diameter; they descended the Steeps of Time; they explored the Deserted Chambers, terrific and desolate with their white ceilings; they found footprints worn in the rocks at Richardson's Spring; they gazed into the horrible gloom of the various pits in the Deserted Chambers, the Covered Pit, the Side-Saddle Pit, and last of all the *Bottomless Pit*. As Constant Earle gazed down into this fearful abyss, shaped like a horse-shoe by a tongue of land which projects into it, his heart for an instant failed him. Should this unexplored horror be more dangerous than he had anticipated, should the rope, by any abrasion with projecting angles of rock,

break, where would his immortal soul find lodgment? It had received the appellation *bottomless;* rocks hurled into it gave back no report of their having found a bed. Torches hurled into it had disappeared in space, twinkling away in the far distance like the red light of the planet Mars, and then, fading into sparks of fire, had disappeared in the blackness of the unknown. Was the undertaking wise? One could not look into that gloomy depth without a shudder. His life would be suspended over space, dependent upon the strength of the fibres of a rope, and the skill of Stephen in managing the windlass. Everything was in readiness in a small cave near at hand. The windlass had been brought in by guides and deposited there with huge coils of rope. No one knew its destination, or the purpose for which they had brought it, but the stanch reticent mulatto who stood before him, watching every expression of his handsome face. He stooped and lifting a huge fragment of a fallen stalactite hurled it into the abyss; it parted the darkness and disappeared. He listened patiently for the crash below; one, two, three, four, five seconds; no return came from below; he knelt and listened for sixty seconds; a shudder chilled him. Was there indeed *no bottom?* No response had come back from the missile. He flung another and another into the pit; the same mysterious silence reigned down in the darkness. He looked up at the face of the guide. Stephen's teeth were exposed in his merry laugh.

"I don't reckon you'll try dat well, Massa Earle," he said, shaking all over with laughter.

"You don't know the Earle tribe, Stephen." Then he added, after one more glance at the yawning mouth of the abyss, "But go on and exhibit the rest of your black domain. The pit will be more serious than I anticipated. I'll have a good rest to-night after we have seen everything that the ordinary run of visitors have explored. To-morrow we'll be here bright and early, and then, God willing, I'm going down into that black den of Pluto. Drive on now. What is your next curiosity on the programme?"

"You goin' down dar sure enough, Massa Earle?"

"Just as sure as you are born, Stephen."

"Well, massa, you be sure enough scientific; regular grit, a perfect *outré*. Is dat right expression?"

"That expresses my determination admirably, Stephen Hurry on, my *fidus Achates.*"

The guide turned away from the yawning gloom of the pit and conducted the visitor along the Winding Way, and then through Persico Avenue, which was two miles long and fifty feet wide with an average height of thirty feet. A part of the distance it was firmly arched above, and so smooth and perfect under foot that a large party might indulge in a race at full speed. A branch of this avenue diverges to the river. From the point where this branch leaves it, Persico Avenue assumes a character more sublime and diversified. The arch above soars away higher and more magnificently towards the surface of the earth. The Gothic arches and pendants and fretted roof are suggestive of the ancient cathedrals. Finally a descent conducted the visitor through a narrow tunnel of white incrustations, which brought him out at the Great Crossings where two caves cross each other. Continuing on, the guide pointed out the Pine Apple Bush, a column of white stalagmite reaching to the ceiling, with branches spreading from it in perfect imitation of the tropical plant. Then he traversed the short but lofty Relief Hall, which led to River Hall. At this point two routes presented themselves, one leading to Bacon Chamber, the Bandit's Hall with a chain of mountains through it, and various other apartments, one of which, the Mammoth Dome, has been pronounced the most sublime subterranean wonder in creation. As the author gazed upward to that stupendous dome rearing itself *four hundred feet* in air, lighted by the fires kindled by the guide on every side, and marvellously glorious in the sailing train of sparks borne aloft by the sky-rockets fired by Stephen's skilful hand, or the colored balls of fire shooting upward from the Roman candles, he shouted in the enthusiasm of the moment, waving his hat towards the vault, and then, grasping a handful of Roman candles, ran away to the far extent to add to the glory and grandeur of the spectacle. He was thrilled, exultant, enthusiastic, forgot the dangerous expedition upon which he had come, and gave himself up wholly to the fascination and brilliancy of the scene.

When the fires died away, and darkness once again returned to its subterranean realm, the guide conducted him to the entrance of River Hall, which led away downward rapidly and far, like the side of some huge mountain, deep, deep into the bowels of the earth. Above his head the roof was seen sloping, like his foot-path, downward towards the

subterranean river ahead. He paused at the suggestion of the guide to look down over a precipice at his left. Here again the guide had deposited piles of wood for fires, in whose glare a broad sea of black, frightful water was revealed far below. When the fires had enveloped wholly the logs, they rolled them down the cliffs, and in the hideous, unearthly glare of their burning the solemn and awe-girdled Dead Sea revealed all its demon-like gloom and suggestive destruction. It seemed as if fiends had delayed their coming and another instant would reveal their leering faces on the black borders of this Stygian lake.

Continuing the descent they reached at last a valley filled with gigantic masses of broken rocks, through whose mysterious passes came the roar of falling waters. Through this unearthly scene glides the black, gloomy waters of the river Styx. A boat was moored to the shore, and securing their lamps in the prow they pushed out upon the appalling flood. The lamps were reflected in the stream; all else was dark. Occasionally they floated near a gloomy rock rearing its head from this river of death. The uncertainty of the route added solemnity to the scene. Silently the author moved across the stream, propelled by the oar of his Charon, and peering into the darkness ahead. It was the most solemn and impressive moment of his life, drifting upon this unknown blackness and far beneath the surface of the earth. Gaining the opposite shore they disembarked and continued their march until they reached the banks of another stream called the River Lethe. Again entering a boat they descended the stream a quarter of a mile, and landing found themselves in a lofty cavern called the Great Walk, which led them to the bank of still another stream, the Echo, which is wide and capable of floating the largest vessels. As they entered a third boat they found the rocks close above their heads. Bending low to escape contact with the arch, and after gliding forward a few feet, they saw the arch above them rapidly receding in the distance and forming a spacious vault above. The scenery was magnificent, revealed by their torches and rockets, and they glided away three quarters of a mile to the opposite shore. The author scooped up in a bag net a number of the white fish which frequent this black river, and found afterwards, upon examination with a microscope, that they were destitute of eyes, that organ being valueless in this realm of utter

darkness. Beyond the river they walked four miles to Cleveland's Avenue, passing through El Ghor, Silliman's Avenue, Wellington's Gallery, and Mary's Vineyard. Cleveland's Avenue proved to be an enormous cavern, replete with those wonderful stalactites which are more gorgeous in their glistening whiteness than ideal dreams of fairy-land. In this extensive avenue were heights which the guide ascended with his lamp and denominated the Rocky Mountains. The author clambered up after him, and aided in the building of fires which revealed the white and silvery glory of the place. They were standing amid the white palaces of the pure and beautiful, and surrounded by the distant shadows of the envious and watchful demons of Hades.

Weary at length of the endless variety of beauty and horror, they turned their steps towards the realms of light. Many miles of travel lay between them and the mouth of the unequalled Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, the wonder and the glory of the Western Hemisphere.

Chapter XLVI.

Facilis descensus Averno;
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,
Hoc opus, hic labor est.

VIRGIL.

Two men stood in the gloom of the "*Deserted Chambers*" holding their torches aloft in the darkness. They were looking down into a strange abyss, deeper and more mysterious than the ancient copper-mine of Fahlun. That venerable shaft, believed to have been worked before the Christian era, extends into the bowels of the earth two thousand two hundred and forty feet. The black pit into which the two serious faces were peering was believed in the vernacular of the Great Cave to be *bottomless*. Would the resolute scion of a fearless stock persist in the exploration? As the guide, awed by the uncertainties of the contemplated exploit, looked at the handsome countenance of his companion, he discovered seriousness, but no indication of quailing. The blue eye was dark and its pupil expanded in the torchlight; the

small, delicate mouth was fixed in expression, but no blanching of the lips told of fear. The face wore the thoughtful expression of the savant earnest in the interest of science weighing well the hazards and hopeful of the advantages of the descent into the unknown. The imagination of a poetic nature at length recalled images of horror. Might not the adventure place him securely in the power and the retreats of the fabled gnomes? He wondered if those internal inhabitants of mother earth were vulnerable by the revolver which peeped out from the bosom of his buckskin jacket. He turned at length to the guide, saying, cheerily: —

"I'm all ready now, Stephen. Give my lamp a twist or two of the rope before you hook on to my belt. Let the handle of it hang within two or three feet of my head; then if I want it I can climb up hand over hand and detach it. I'm going to carry my grandfather's umbrella to push myself clear of the rocks, when they crowd me too close. I must carry a small bag of provisions, for there's no telling when I may come back. When the bag is emptied into my stomach I can fill it again with geological specimens, which I shall knock off with my hammer when I'm coming up."

"I 'spects, Massa Earle, it'll bother ye a heap to git at de lamp ag'in."

"Never fear, Stephen. I learned in the gymnasium to climb a rope hand over hand. I'm sailor enough for that."

The handle of the lamp was soon looped into the rope and the hook a few feet below it was caught into the iron ring at the back of the adventurer's belt. The rope passed several times around the cylinder of the windlass, and then wandered away into the darkness of the cave in huge coils. An ample supply had been laid in for all contingencies, and when the first that passed around the cylinder should be exhausted, loops were ready at the ends of other coils to be attached and lowered into the pit.

"Now, Stephen, give me a farewell shake of your hand, in case of accidents. Lower me very slowly, for I want to inspect the rocks and their geological formation. If you hear my pistol fire, wind me up to you; if not, don't attempt to raise me under twelve hours. Good-by, old fellow."

With a parting shake of the hand he approached the edge of a cliff which projected a few feet over the gulf, and where an iron wheel grooved on the periphery was secured to receive the descending rope. The guide assisted him over the

edge, and placed the rope in the groove of the wheel. Then he returned to the windlass, cast off the clogs, and commenced to turn the cylinder.

Slowly, carefully, descended the human life, swinging over fathomless space, suspended by the iron ring which was secured in his belt behind. The lamp above his head cast its rays over a narrow circle, but broad enough to give a full view of the solemn rocks. After a time his perpendicular line of descent brought him near a projecting spur of the subterranean cliff. He discovered that he was passing subcarboniferous limestone, whose wonderfully cavernous character has rendered the State of Kentucky so famous. He glanced then downward, and shuddered at the awful blackness which his feet were cleaving. One glance upward revealed the steady glare of his lamp close above, and he saw far away through the darkness the lamp of the guide secured in a cleft of rock and diminishing gradually in size. Slowly and solemnly his body descended in the darkness, and when he looked upward again the guide's lamp glimmered like a distant star. Carefully he inspected the adamantine walls of the pit about him, their even strata or cavernous openings, into which he peered in vain for a terminus, witnessing for the first time, probably, the vision of a human face. He was at length in the midst of utter silence. The creaking of the windlass which for a long time had reached his ear had gradually grown fainter and fainter, until at last it was heard no more. Could Stephen have paused in his labor? No! the changing features of the rocks indicated that every instant he was going lower. The last feeble clicking sound of human origin had died away in distance, and he was alone, hanging over the black emptiness of space. It was unmanly to think of apprehension yet. Might not the bottom of the horrid gulf be near? He thrust his hand into the breast of his buckskin jacket, and, drawing forth a fragment of stalactite larger than his fist, dropped it at his feet. How eagerly he listened! He could hear the palpitations of his heart. *One*, *two*, *three*, *four*, *five*, *six seconds*. No response came from below. He counted on to *sixty*. All was silent as the grave. Where had it gone? Was the pit bottomless? Was it a tunnel only to eternity? A shudder, an overwhelming awe crossed him. But still, slowly, surely, constantly, he moved downward. One consciousness had superseded, swallowed up, all others. One monosyllable reigned

in his lone, isolated intellect, *depth*. Was the fragment of stalactite still sweeping downward below him? Not a breath, not a whisper of sound had returned from the antipodal blackness. In the horror and uncertainty of fathomless space below he looked up to his sole salvation above, the durability and strength of the fibres of the single rope which held his life suspended as a lamp. Every memory of appalling and pendent danger he had ever heard or read of came to him then. He remembered men whose hair had instantly turned gray when they beheld the fibres of a rope yielding one by one above them. Was his support perfectly and infallibly secure? Were there no flaws in the rope? Was no abrasion of the rope against a rocky angle of the cliffs above, at that moment going on? He swung against the wall of the pit at that instant. His feet swept against the side, and then his body touched the rock, and the lamp above him clashed against it. What could that mean? The law of the perpendicular had evidently met with an obstacle, slight, it was true, but fearfully suggestive. The slight interference with his descent recalled again with terrible distinctness the danger of future abrasion. Some cliff-edge might be sharp as a knife. Then would ensue the sudden sweep downward to destruction. Ah! he touched the side again, and instantly a cloud swept over him enveloping him in total darkness. His eyes were closed, and he could not raise the lids. Something clammy as death enwrapped him from head to foot. It was not death, but horrid, disgusting, suffocating life. He was wrapped from head to foot in clammy blackness. Every inch of his face, hair, shoulders, arms, and body were enveloped with horror, tremulous, living horror, and he could not open his eyes, could not raise his arms from his side, and the weight of the clammy mass was doubling and thickening upon him every instant. Even his lamp was enveloped in sheets of accumulating blackness and clammy life. Not one effort could he make to free himself. He could only tremble. His eyelids were glued together and his heart called on God. Slowly downward into blackness he descended, and his black pall was tremulous and quivering life. He was the centre of a disgusting mass of tens of thousands of swarming black *bats*. Slowly he descended in suffocating silence, when, lo! the overwhelming mass deserted him as suddenly as they had come. He opened his eyes upon a lateral cavern, where clouds of the bats were

sweeping away from him, and where he could see them clinging to the walls and roof in myriad groups, or festooned from rock to rock and clinging to each other. The reality of the danger he had escaped was manifested an instant after he had passed the bat cavern. His descent was suddenly checked. There he was suspended in space, with his lamp lighting the gloom about him. After an instant's reflection he concluded that he had reached the end of his rope, and that the fearfully remote Stephen was attaching another coil. He remained undulating slowly in space, and realizing that had the rope given out a score of feet above, he should have been suffocated to death by the bats. While the operation of attaching more rope was going on, he examined the rock close beside him. It was evidently sandstone. No doubt he had penetrated deep into the primary fossiliferous or palæozoic class of rocks. He concluded, upon further inspection, that he was amid the Devonian group, and that the Silurian group of rocks was still below him.

All was silence and gloom beyond the narrow circle illumined by the rays of his lamp. Close before him were the rocks he had examined, and when he whirled himself about he saw that the pit was bordered on that side by a cavern stretching away before him, apparently vast and lofty as those he had examined nearer the surface of the earth. Suddenly he felt his feet cleaving space again. He was descending once more. Hope and assistance were being parted from him farther and farther at every revolution of that remote cylinder. Where was this all to end? Gradually the sides of the pit parted from him also, widening away from him until they, too, were lost in the gloom. His lamp revealed no longer a single object upon which the eye could rest. He was apparently suspended in unlimited space. Even the friendly sides of the abyss had left him, and the measureless gloom grew painful. Anxiously he drew another fragment of stalactite from his bosom, and dropped it below him. His acute ear listened long and well. No response came back. The fragment was still cleaving its way downward. It might have miles yet to travel before it found a resting-place. Silently on and on descended that terrified soul. After a period which seemed to be hours to him, he ceased the descent, and hung silently as before. Nothing was around him but black space. Was it best to continue so hopeless an exploration? Should he still seek the

bottom of a bottomless pit? While his reason suggested return, his indomitable will induced him to withhold that shot from his pistol which would announce his abandonment of the search. Would that shot help him? This became an appalling doubt. It was a serious question whether or not the noise of that discharge would now reach the far-off guide. While he debated the matter in his mind, a new coil of rope had evidently been attached, and he was descending again slowly, slowly passing down into black, horrible immensity. Minutes rolled away and still he met nothing, saw nothing but the narrow circle of light, horrifying intense darkness. He grew nervous at length and ardently longed for a solid of some kind to loom into sight. Vain hope! On and on, silently downward he moved.

When the descent ceased again and no object had made its appearance, he decided to give the signal for return. He could no longer endure that terrible undulating in space, that silence fearful as death, that consciousness of isolation from man and material objects. Even a vile bat would have been a relief. He could endure it no longer. He drew his revolver and fired. The flash lighted up a broad sphere of darkness around him apparently boundless. A terrific roar came back to him at last, deafening in its echoes, but so long, so tardy in its response, that the concussion made by the shot seemed to have travelled away miles into the lateral darkness before it met the hidden rocks. What was his horror to discover that his signal had failed! The terrible rope commenced again its downward course; he descended with it, and in his agony fired another shot from his revolver. The same tardy, fearful response came back, and down, down, down, he passed into gloom and blackness unutterable. There was no hope now. He must continue his downward career until the rope was all exhausted, or the appointed number of hours had elapsed. He resigned himself sullenly to this exhausting result of his temerity, and, summoning all his fortitude, braced himself for the unknown depths still below him. He counted seconds, minutes, hours away, and still the rope descended with him, sometimes pausing for fresh reinforcement to its length, and then slowly, slowly moving down again. It could not be possible that the pit had no bottom. The idea was absurd; the coinage of some feeble brain that had exhausted itself in a few experiments with fragments of rocks. He resolved to try once more the

flight of a rock. He drew from his bosom the last representative of the rocky world above him. He dropped the last fragment of stalactite into the blackness he was cleaving with his feet. It passed away from his hand and was heard no more than its fellows which had preceded it. All was silence. The stalactite had dropped into bottomless immensity.

At this instant he heard a sharp snap above his head. He grasped the rope behind his neck, and by the sheer power of the muscles of his arms drew himself upward, hand over hand towards his lamp. The light revealed distinctly the few feet of rope above his head. Horror! the snap had not deceived him. The attrition of sharp rocks had cut the rope between his head and the lamp, and it was giving way strand by strand. As he struggled upward, another snap and another followed sharply. He desperately grappled the rope to raise himself above the breaking point. His struggle hastened the catastrophe. Another strand snapped above his upper hand, and instantly the rope *broke* just below the lamp. He fell like a cannon-ball after the stalactite, and left his lamp swinging in mid-air. Fleet as an arrow sped from a bow he passed down through the swift *suck* of the air, *lost*.

At what point in this flight downward through space must death have ensued? A law of physics declares that the whole spaces passed over by a falling body, starting from a state of rest, are proportional to the squares of the times employed in falling, while the spaces fallen through in successive times increase as the odd numbers one, three, five, seven, etc. Assuming that, at the latitude of the Mammoth Cave, his body would have fallen sixteen and a half feet in the first second, then, according to this law, the second second would have found him forty-eight and a quarter feet lower in space, and the *ninth* second would have seen him rushing downward into darkness more than *one thousand three hundred feet* from the point where his body started to fall. But it is believed that in falling immense distances human life becomes extinct in mid-air. At some point then in that subterranean darkness the body and soul of Constant Earle must have parted company, the one continuing on in its ever-increasing velocity downward, and the other sailing swiftly upward like a star through the darkness to its celestial home. Assuredly, if ever a mortal could properly and

reasonably expect to secure at death a residence among the stars, that blissful fate was reserved for the author who had struggled so manfully to please God.

But his hour had not yet come. Downward and still downward he sped. Rocks, enormous and broken, passed him in his flight; caverns, dark and hidden in eternal gloom, swept past him. He cleared the strata of the Silurian group, he entered the region of the Cambrian group, he flew past masses of gneiss, granite, crystalline rocks. Merciful Heaven! was he *en route* for Pluto's realm? At length he paused, not with a terrific crash against a rocky bottom, not mutilated and torn limb from limb, but gently subsiding upon his feet upon a firm foundation, deeper in the bowels of the earth than any of his race had ever penetrated before. He shook from head to foot in terror; he was in total darkness, imprisoned in a dungeon and a gloom, where heroism and fortitude were impossibilities, were simply myths. One heroism alone was left to him, a Christian's resolution to die patiently and well. Thousands of feet beneath a cavern, whose entrance was miles away upon the surface of the earth, what could he do but pray and suffer and die? He soon dropped to his knees and prayed earnestly to God for grace to die patiently, calmly, serenely, in that excessive, horrid darkness. Darkness pressed upon him in agony, darkness inexpressible. He forgot not The Evening Star in his prayer. She was a part of his life. She might some day learn from the public press that a man had disappeared in the Bottomless Pit of the Great Cave, who had once been her friend, her instructor, her guide. How earnestly he prayed that Nacoochee might shed tears at his sad fate, might think of his body crumbling to dust where man had never crumbled before! Perhaps God would permit him to see her in heaven. He implored the God in whom he ever trusted to grant him that bright joy in the celestial home, the peace of seeing the mutilated girl restored to her pristine beauty in heaven and glorified as an angel of light.

Then he pressed to his bosom the silent friend that had prolonged his existence, that had laughed at time and space, and in the blackness of that horrid gulf landed him safely upon a rock. In his death grapple he had clung to it. In that upper reaching of his brawny arms upon the parting rope he had grasped it in his firm right hand. The shock of the fall and the upward pressure of the air had expanded

it. Wide open spread its wings and bore him safely downward through the gloom. He was saved by a parachute. The fabrics of the forefathers, and the frames upon which they were spread, were no contemptible friends in struggles with mid-air. The ancestral umbrella had opened and saved him in his descent. *Gloria tibi, umbraculum!*

He extended the iron-pointed friend out into the darkness. It encountered no obstacle. He groped about with it. There was rock under his feet and black space before him. He cautiously moved forward, feeling for pitfalls. None rewarded his search. Some sudden impulse moved him to reverse his course. It was not within the range of metaphysical science to explain that impulse. He turned and beheld a marvel, a subterranean *Star*, gleaming far away upon the blackness. It recalled the evening star which rises upon night, and The Evening Star which arose upon his intellectual despair, Nacoochee. He kneeled reverently and blessed the name of God for the gift of the star. Death by starlight is sweeter than death in utter gloom. He slowly groped along towards the miniature star. He wished to die as near to it as God would permit. On, on, on, his trembling limbs moved in the direction of the far-off subterranean light. He had tediously and slowly traversed a mile of darkness when the rays of the star distended into moonlight. Was it the hallucination of death?

Chapter XLVII.

—— if this be *hell* I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none.
BYRON.

WITH his left hand pressed upon his heart to still its violent pulsations, the astonished explorer advanced into the mysterious moonlight. It was brightening upon him. Already the cavernous vault above him was faintly illumined by the far-off flutter of the subterranean luminary. The glisten of crystallization was above him and around him, and he began to recognize the hypozoic character of the rocks. As he advanced through the narrow tunnel which seemed to

lead to the centre of the distant moonlight, the soft wavy light which resembled the super-terrestrial glory of the moon, strange flashes of yellow glory seemed to fleck the walls of the cavern. He started at the apparition and feared his imagination was playing strange freaks with the sides of his last prison-house. He pressed forward towards the increasing power of his beacon light. The path he was treading grew more luminous. A more violent flutter of the distant orb sent pencils of rays along the cavern, and he started back at the sudden gleam of light which seemed to cross his path in traces of yellow fire. He kneeled down and waited for another and more spasmodic flutter of the light which was leading him. It soon came. Great Jupiter! his feet were treading upon masses of quartz rock, veined with yellow leaves and vines. "Metamorphic!" burst from his lips as he bent his eyes to the strange pavement. "Quartz, —gold! gold! gold!" He knelt lower, waiting for another great flutter of light. His blood was coursing his veins like fire. It came, that wonderful pulsation of radiance once more, and the whole cavern glowed like the sun for an instant. Above him, beneath him, around him, was gold and quartz, —gold, gold; he was traversing a subterranean mine, *rich*, *rich* in pure, beautiful gold. He arose in wild rapture, and gazed about him; he saw, for the first time, pendants of pure gold hanging from the low ceiling, as if they had melted in the action of fire and frozen again ere they fell, their long, tapering fingers pointing at him and brilliantly flashing when the pulsations of light traversed the cavern. Eagerly, madly he pressed forward. Hark! what low, distant roll broke upon his ear? He paused in awe to listen. It came once more, that subdued, distant, and yet solemn roll like the surf breaking upon the ocean beach. He became conscious, for the first time, of a gentle, tropical, soothing warmth. He wondered and hastened forward; his path was growing brighter and less arduous at every step. It soon became clear and distinct before him. He was travelling upon a mosaic pavement of quartz and gold. Again the heavy roll from the sea met his ear, and then a boom came sullenly over the stillness; then a shock ensued which jarred the arch above his head, and he paused, trembling in every joint. All was followed by utter silence. Again he pressed forward, hearing at intervals that mysterious and unknown roll of the surf. Brighter and brighter

grew his path, clearer and more brilliantly flashed forth the pendants of gold, the long, tortuous stalactites of precious, unadulterated metal. Where was he hastening in blended awe and rapture? The glory ahead augmented; his countenance was radiant in the advancing brilliancy; he dashed forward, passed an obstructing ledge of quartz rocks, turned to the right, and beheld a sight never conceived by mortal imagination. Like the great sweep of a cathedral's vaulted roof arose before him an arch of surpassing brilliancy, formed of quartz rock, encrusted with fantastic ornaments and stalactites of pure gold. Arch after arch succeeded each other before him, and all brilliantly illuminated by distant fires, and linked to each other by an ethereal open net-work of gold, whose every mesh was distinctly traced in the brilliancy of the fluttering fires ahead. Over the magic hall was an immense, far-off canopy, a firmament of white crystal, upon whose vault fragments of gold glistened like meteors. He ran through the subterranean arches, and beheld through their supporting columns far-off palaces and temples whose spires, and turrets, and mullioned windows were encrusted with pure, molten gold, dazzlingly beautiful. The array of lofty buildings, graceful and weird, with wreaths of gold circling their white columns, stretched away miles before him, and outshone in extravagance and beauty the Byzantine basilicas of the Cæsars. The central fires of the earth had carved away the solid mountains of gold-bearing quartz rocks, until they had left only slender columns and arches remaining, upon which the molten gold from above had fallen, wreathing them with vines, and pointing them with pinnacles, until a blaze of magnificence answered to the glow of the retreating fires. No Assyrian dream of Ginnistan, where antediluvian Peris fluttered through halls of marble and gold; no palace of Cosroes, immortalized by the poet Antar, could rival these subterranean basilicas erected by the salamander spirits to the secret worship of the Eternal. For miles they seemed to glimmer away, and as the awed explorer climbed to the summit of a quartz flight of steps, which conducted to the tower of a temple, and looked down over the scene, he discovered, far away, pools of a dazzling brilliancy, over which waves of transparent blood-red fire seemed to play and sparkle, as if rubies had gathered to them from ten millions of subterranean treasuries in molten streams. There were fantastic, airy figures of open

work gold, clinging to the quartz cliffs. He saw distinctly a Druid clinging to the branches of a golden oak and cutting away with golden sickle *the spirit's branch*. Atahuallpa, the inca, might have collected his ransom here in an hour The internal fires, which once had held high revel here, had caused the disintegration and crumbling away of the talcose and granitic rocks above, and the freed auriferous veins had swept their contents down to lower levels, falling in molten streams upon quartz palaces and pinnacles, and perfecting the magnificence of the architecture.

Bewildered, paralyzed, by this wonderous *chef-d'œuvre* of nature, he stood long upon the quartz steps, his eyes ranging over new beauties, detecting new glories wherever he turned. Far away in the distance lurid flames seemed to vault upward from huge recesses, and he realized the fearful roll of a distant sea of fire. He descended to the floors of the halls and palaces, and found that some of them were washed with gold. The stream of molten metal had swept the pavements, and there hardened after the retreat of the fires. Feeling assured that never more would he view the surface of the earth; that he had fallen beyond the reach and help of mortals, he prepared for death in this gorgeous mausoleum. He knelt upon the glistening, golden pavement of a temple, and committed his soul to God who gave it, looking upward through the fretted arches to the golden stars on the white firmament. In the flush of manly health he dedicated himself to the Conqueror of death. Then he arose, and with his geological hammer, which clung still to his belt, he indented upon a tablet of flashing gold the name "Constant Earle," and beneath it, the inscription on the coffin of Gustavus Adolphus, "*Moriens triumphavit.*" Another reflection crossed his brain and he covered his face with his hands. The agony of that long separation overwhelmed him; he grew calm at length, and, raising his hammer once more, traced roughly beneath his motto and his name, "*Nacoochee, the Evening Star.*"

Then thoughtfully he wandered on and on, the vividness of his speedy death yielding at length to the surpassing glories of the scene about him. He passed a grotto fashioned by the fire from an immense block of pale-red porphyry. Arches and pillars and domes had been carved in it by the fire, and molten gold had swept its floors. The famous spotted porphyry vase, the largest in the world, which orna

ments the Djur garden of Stockholm, near the palace Rosendal, would have made an appropiate centre-piece to stand beneath one of these domes. Farther on he found a plain of rock covered with conical mounds of dazzling whiteness with a crater at the top of each, as if they had been formed by the mineral deposit of springs, like the glistening *Hammām Shoutin* or *cursed baths* of North Africa. He passed on to groups of angels, fashioned from white crystals by the fantastic play of intense fires, upon whose heads the molten gold had fallen and hardened into glittering crowns solid or open. He paused in amazement before one white seraph, upon whose crown drops of silver had fallen from some earthquake above, before the gold had hardened. Wandering on, he passed a range of chambers fashioned in white crystal, the delicate net-work of whose walls admitted the pencils of rays from the distant fires. Sitting then upon the rocks he devoured the provisions with which Stephen had filled the bag, and begged of God in his heart to spare his life, vowing that he would discharge the duties of this stewardship as mortal had never employed wealth before. He longed to live. He knelt and prayed vehemently for life, for life to honor God, for life to benefit humanity, for life to aid the struggling and meritorious, for life to erect institutions of charity and learning. Then, as the ever-recurring memory of The Evening Star came back, he murmured, "O God! give me not the agony of life without her love. Wealth would burden me without that voice to whisper love and counsel beside me."

He sat dreamily gazing upon the magnificence of the inner earth, searching at times the far-off horizon where the scarlet fires played madly in their mission of creation and destruction, and then lingering im reverie beside the golden and white formations glistening before him like the witchery of a dream. It was no dream. He knew that God had opened to him that fearful, inner, igneous mystery which had baffled the speculations of savans in all ages. He had reached a spur, an offshoot of those great central fires of the earth which antiquity denominated Hades, but to which patient, meek-browed, noble science ascribes the horror of the earthquake and the alternate brilliance and gloom of the rock-melting volcano.

As he sat in silence beside his newly found treasure, revelling in the beauties and marvels of the place, realizing with

poetic eye every transformation of beauty and grace, and with a Christian's heart adoring the Master architect, he caught at intervals the roll of the fire-sea. It was solemn, awe-inspiring, and filled him with the fear and honor of his Creator

Strange sounds reached him at last, sweeping nearer and nearer to his place of moderate heat, and he fancied, or really heard, the shock of earthquakes, the rumbling of falling mountains of rock, or the burst of gaseous explosions, making and unmaking terrestrial formations, and slowly preparing matter for that great and last dissolution when "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

He arose at length and made his way in curiosity towards the roaring fire-sea and the explosive sounds. He passed net-works of stalactites and stalagmites of gold, arches of green porphyry, columns of flesh-colored graphic granite spotted with white feldspar, and further on he encountered a castle of gneiss, whose Corinthian columns with overhanging capitals of silver leaves gave distinctly to view their successive strata of quartz, mica, and feldspar. The castle was dripping with the rains of silver which some upward rush of fire had stolen from vast silver mines above, and which had hardened as they ornamented the palace below. At every step new transformations appeared. He saw a silver gleam issuing from a ragged and upheaved mass of metamorphic rocks. And when he had neared the place the fire-light revealed a cascade of silver which had rolled from cliff to cliff and stiffened at every leap, till it remained solid and beautiful in its downward undulations. The handiwork of salamanders was exquisitely graceful at intervals in the rich and confused mass, and he found pyramidal rocks sheathed in silver, and trees of graceful hornblende slates bending beneath the weight of silver and golden fruit.

What should be the next step in his singular destiny? Where should he turn? Was escape to be dreamed of? He looked backward over the route he had come. All was beautiful and gorgeous behind him. Before him was new wonder and the great sea of fire. Behind him was an opening, a hopeless opening upward to the great cave just under the surface of the earth. Should he return to the bottom of the great pit down which he had fallen and there await death? No succor could reach him

there. The faithful guide might possibly hurl into the great abyss bread for him. It was barely possible; but the aged Stephen was faithful unto death. Everything that mortal man could do that honest soul would remember and put in execution. Would he hope at all when the broken end of the rope and torch came back to the windlass? *He might.* And those two words decided the course of the lost explorer. He knew that the guide had taken unusual interest in him. His sympathy and gentleness and manly courage won him friends at every turn in the life-path. He swept love and devotion into his train with the ease of René le Bon. Charity had been ever his *mot d'ordre.* It wins in the long run, that grand old Christian word. He would return then clinging to the feeble shred of hope.

But he was a scholar. Naught that reigns and moves in the celestial vault, no power that slumbers in matter or mind, was devoid of interest to him. He must approach once that strange shore upon which the fire-surf rolled so solemnly. There might be hazard. What was that to a man who felt conscious that hardihood had imprisoned him probably forever in the most lonely and the most superb mausoleum that human fancy ever had conceived? He kneeled once again to his God and implored protection and submission to his divine will. Then he moved on towards the subterranean sea of fire.

After crossing hardened streams of blue and drab lava, from some extinct volcano which had swept down from the rocks in cascades, he encountered a huge wall of black basalt which had resulted from the cooling of some state of igneous fusion. The barrier was pierced by rude gate-openings through which the red fire-light was casting its rays over the plain. The contrast of this black partition was striking, as he cast a glance at the white firmament above with its golden stars. Passing through one of the natural gates, he turned to look back at the basaltic wall. What was his surprise to discover against the black mass a rude cross of gold formed by some ancient drip from the mine above! How strangely shone forth in this lonely magnificence the symbol of salvation! Tears gathered to his eyes at this mute appeal to his Christian heart. He bowed in spirit before it, and was filled with cheer. The Saviour would not forget one for whom he had died. He passed on then, but ever and anon looking back. The cross was visi-

ble for a great distance against its gloomy basaltic background. It soothed his heart like a whisper from heaven. At length he reached a precipice and looked down into a great abyss stretching away apparently miles down towards the centre of the earth. It was far away below him, and he beheld in the immense depth the rolling fire-waves of the interminable inner sea. Awe-struck he stood upon the rocky mountain-side which seemed to slope away miles to the shore of the igneous gulf, and saw mountains of rock in the far distance undermined by the waves of fire and hurled into the red ocean, granite cliffs melting and flowing down into the fiery flood, and heard the booming of explosive gases splitting the rocks, and the crash of earthquakes rending the superimposed strata of adamant and opening passages for the far-up groups of geological rocks to tumble into the subterranean fires. He saw in the distance a stream of melted lead falling from the fractured rocks above and pouring into the fiery lake with a glitter like that of the immense and brilliant steel mirror which crowned the dome of the sanctuary in the principal temple of Heliopolis.

He turned away at length from the wild, fascinating spectacle, wondering at the immense distance of the central fires which only wafted to his locality a tropical warmth. He returned along the wonderful path he had come, gazing upon new and dazzling formations over which ever that distant fluttering pulsation of light was marvellously waving which had first attracted his attention when he was following the solitary star.

Chapter XLVIII.

It was a temple, such as mortal hand
Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream
Reared in the cities of enchanted land.

SHELLEY.

BAILLEY was of the opinion that astronomy was a familiar science of the antediluvians, fragments of whose astronomical lore have escaped the deluge. Lalande refers the origin of this science to the Egyptians, apprehensive that it might

prove too much for the Sacred Books. The Hebrews, however, the neighbors, cotemporaries, and sojourners among the Egyptians, sustain the conjecture of Bailley, and inform us that the latter people derived their astronomical knowledge from traditions rescued from the deluge. However this may be, Constant Earle was standing far below the surface of the earth, intently gazing upon a huge tablet of what appeared to be zodiacal signs, series of stars, comets, and hieroglyphics. He was on the point of entering the long tunnel, which would conduct him to the spot to which he had descended in his fall, when his eye caught the gleam of a golden band further on, and apparently arranged in a great square against a cliff of dark rock. He approached the spot and beheld a great variety of signs, cycles, and figures of beasts, cut in the solid rock by the undoubted instruments of human sculpture. It was the labor of human hands. No eye could attribute that regular, methodical carving in the rocky wall to nature. He realized instantly that it must be the work of the great antediluvian astronomer, the brother of Ogyges, that wonderful savant who predicted the result of God's natural law, through which the avenging deity punished the crimes of men, that great coryphæus of human learning and rebellion, who admitted the coming of the deluge, but hoped to escape its influence by penetrating the earth and walling up the passage behind him. He had carved here the whole prediction of the great flood. The ark of his brother was traced in the stone, and the family of Ogyges hastening into it for safety. The sun, moon, and stars were carved in the rocks, and also figures in a great circle, which appeared to be zodiacal signs. Familiar as the author was with the chronological system of the Aztecs and their method of distributing the years into cycles and of reckoning by periodical series, in the place of numbers, so remarkably similar to the process of the Mongol race, he could not make out these signs. Another cycle met his eye, which resembled in its accompanying figures the animals which are common to the Eastern Asiatics and the Aztecs as symbols of their calendars. He puzzled long over the symbols and could decipher nothing. But one chain of events he could comprehend. A procession of men, women, children, and animals were entering a great circle, and descending a flight of steps. A thrill of intense anxiety crossed his heart. In that venerable antiquity, no doubt the despiser of God, having every appliance of wealth

and power at his command, had employed thousands of his subjects to cut stone steps down to the lower cave, of which he had secretly learned the existence. If this conjecture was plausible, if this herculean labor of years had indeed been carried on, was it possible that in the lapse of ages the secret stairway could have been preserved? The bare idea filled the lost man with a thrill of passionate joy. He would search for this wonderful spiral stairway. Where would it most likely be found, if convulsions and changes of the rocks had spared it? Undoubtedly it had been built around the rocky sides of the Bottomless Pit. But then he would have seen it at some points in his descent, while a lamp had been at his command. He abandoned then that conjecture instanter, and concluded that some other and more secret pit communicated with the great cave above. He studied once more the great tablet, with its border of gold firmly secured to the rocks. That gave him no further light. He examined the mouth of the tunnel which had admitted him to the arches and palaces of the subterranean marvel. He discovered there, what had before escaped his notice, vast Cyclopean masses of hewn rock scattered about, huge parallelopipedal blocks of stone which had evidently once blocked up the entrance to the tunnel. They were finely squared, and resembled the Cyclopean rocks in the walls of Tiryns and Mycenæ, which are generally assigned to a Pelasgic origin. They had been pulled down and scattered perhaps when the deluge was over. What, then, had become of the ancient astronomer and his family? Had they been overtaken by fire from the vast subterranean crucible, as Solon had been informed by the Egyptian priests? Where had they escaped or attempted to escape when the anger of God overtook them with the fiery destroyer? He turned away from the tunnel and sought the gold-bordered tablet again. He examined it carefully in the fluttering light from the distant fires. The signs and hieroglyphics were carved upon a broad cliff, smooth and lofty as the sides of a basilica. He passed around the ancient monument of human will and insane defiance, and, lo! the stairs hewn in the solid rock, and circling a new and narrow pit, seemed to mount upward into the blackness. He had scarcely dared to hope for this result of his conjecture, for this confirmation of his quick rendering of the hieroglyphical stairs in the ring of the tablet. With that cry of exultation which burst from the lips

of Archimedes, when he discovered in his bath the doctrine of specific gravities, he fell upon his knees, — "Eureka, Eureka!" Then, as the danger of the ascent without a ray of light, around an unknown pit, and upon antediluvian steps which may have been shattered at many points by earthquakes, was made manifest, he relapsed again into despair. Strange fatality! With the wealth of an empire around him, he could not command a rushlight to guide him up the ancient stairway. With miles of fire stretching away before him, he could not gain one spark to light him to safety. Oh, the horror of that thought, that Tantalus agony of an ocean of fire before him, to which he could not, dared not, approach to seize enough in a fragment of rock to light him upward! The intense heat would have melted him, miles away from the shore of the billowy fire, had he dared to approach it. There was a focus of rays from golden and crystal walls which would have annihilated him in the distance more effectually than the reflecting mirrors of Archimedes fired the Roman fleet.

He sat down upon a rock and racked his brain to discover some plan of securing a light for the ascent. He searched his pockets for a match; he found two. The exultation quickly vanished. Of what use were they to him? He had no torch, no lamp to light. What had he about him that would burn? Oh, cotton! He had provided himself for rough exploration with a large, coarse, cotton handkerchief. Alas! that would not burn, would not light him up that fearful and unknown height. It would blaze away, perhaps, at the touch of a match and speedily be consumed. What would that avail him? He had no approximate conception of the distance he had fallen after the breaking of the rope. He knew the descent must have been immense to have brought him near an upshooting branch of the central fires of the earth. What could he do with the cotton fabric to make it available? An idea came swiftly to him. He had abandoned part of the fatty substance of the meat which had been a part of his meal. He might succeed in finding those fragments and saturating the cotton with their grease. He hastened away at the thought through the arches and temples to the point where he had emptied his bag. To his inexpressible relief he found the fragments of the fatty meat and proceeded to rub them over his handkerchief. He extracted every particle of grease that was possible, and then

trushing the fat between rocks tore it into shreds and wound it up in torches of the cotton. He had finally in his possession a dozen fatty tapers wound with cotton, and two matches to light them. What a slender bundle of hopes with which to penetrate through unknown darkness to upper earth, to a cave far, far above him, in which it was deemed certain destruction to wander without a guide! He had witnessed the dangers of that cave; could he ever penetrate again to it, ever succeed in rising through its floor into its fearful darkness? It might be miles above him. Most men would have resigned themselves to despair, would have wandered up and down the fire-lighted palaces of the inner earth until hunger, the wolf, had devoured them. But the lost explorer was an Earle. One brother of that indomitable family never abandoned any purpose. The younger brother had implored God to grant him strength never to abandon a good one. He resolutely prepared for the ascent earthwards. God speed him, for with tapers of rags he would penetrate that immense blackness upon which the sun had never shone. Was a guardian angel standing beside him at that moment of indomitable will? Had her white but invisible wings fluttered beside him when he fell, and followed him into this subterranean dream of the Ghebers? He would know before many hours, and, trusting himself to his Maker's care, he bade farewell to the retreat of the salamanders, and placed his foot upon the lowest step of the antediluvian stairway. There he paused to light a match upon the rock. The slender origin of light gave out a feeble, sickly blue flame, which immediately expired. Merciful heaven! one match alone held for him the fate of life or death. He had but one more. Carefully, but in fear, he drew it upon his sleeve; instantly the light flickered up, trembled at the end of the match, held its own for a second, and then suddenly burst out into a yellow flame. He held it to one of his rag tapers; a small but calm flame ensued, and he commenced the ascent slowly. Slowly he ascended, scanning every step, with a rag taper only between him and death. If that slight flame should expire the lamp of life would speedily flicker out. According to the belief of the Persians, every month was under the protection of its angel. He prayed, as he slowly moved upward, that every flicker of his feeble light might be similarly guarded. There was apparently little danger that sudden gusts of wind would extinguish his taper. In

that subterranean retreat the Polish deity, Pagoda (calm air), reigned supreme.

What a fearful, and yet sublime spectacle, that solitary being, that indomitable and honest soul of the present age, stealing cautiously up into gloom impenetrable, along a stairway hewn from the solid rock by hands that had crumbled in the shadowy ages, — hands that may have completed their menial labors for another, and then returned to sunlight only to be swept away by the deluge, or hands that may have shared the glorious prison-house and the ultimate fire-death of the God-despising student of the stars! His manly, muscular frame, clad in the buckskin jacket and trowsers, a skull-cap surmounting his head, the geologist's hammer at his belt, the taper held aloft in his left hand, and the fast friend, the never-to-be-abandoned heirloom of his family, grasped as a staff in his right, constituted a strange picture. There was a fearless, defiant, upward curl of his light mustache, a clear, eager, searching glance of his lustrous proud eye, and an air of resolution and courage in every movement of his gracefully limbed body, that told how justly he had indented in the tablet of gold his manly epitaph, "*Moriens triumphavit.*"

At length he gained a point where, looking downward through the shaft of his winding stairway, he beheld the distant light of the inner earth no larger than a star, as he had first witnessed it. Continuing his ascent, he turned again. The star had vanished. Above, below him now, was nought but darkness impenetrable. The taper burned feebly, barely exposing a half dozen steps above him. But every step was immovable rock, carefully chiselled, and yielding him firm and even support. Master-workmen had hewn that marvellous adamantine pathway. There was apparently little danger in the ascent, save only in the possible failure of light. If strength should hold out to climb, all might be well. The stairway might lead to some avenue of the Great Cave. Should this happy result be attained, he might chance to espy the torch of some guide conducting a new party of visitors through the avenues. Stephen might be passing within hail. How untenable are the positions of hope for a man lost in the Mammoth Cave! And this poor, lost explorer was indulging in the pleasant delusions of escape, while the great cavern was far away above him. Would the ancient stairs lead to the cave? Would the upper steps be

open and free where stalagmites were forming from age to age in huge, obstructing columns? Might not his stairway be blocked up at the top, or near the top?

The taper was burning low upon his grasp, and he lighted another, carefully preserving the fragment of the first. He travelled upward until he became dizzy from the monotonous character of the ascent. He reached forth to the rocky wall for support and staggered on. The pain of fatigue in his knees was becoming insupportable, and yet he feared to pause and rest. He had no means of preserving light, save through his tapers, and if he paused to sleep the light might disappear. The agony of falling there in sleep only to wake in utter darkness was too appalling. He struggled on. But overtasked nature asserted itself at last. He reeled after a time against the wall and slept. His last conscious act was bracing his back against the rock and holding his taper firmly against his breast that it might not escape him. How long he slumbered he had no means of ascertaining. He was awakened at last by the flame of the taper burning his hand. The fragment nearly escaped him in the start of pain. His hand was the socket, and the taper burned low in it. He endured the pain like a Spartan until another taper was lighted. Then he arose and mounted upward again. After another tedious ascent, which seemed to have covered miles of distance, he sank down exhausted again. The hazard of losing his taper in his sleep was too vivid. He feared that sudden start when the fire reached down to his hand. He discovered a crevice in the wall, fixed a taper in it and lighted it. Then, with another light in his hand, he leaned back against the wall and slept again. When he awoke, it was from the agony of a dream that his light had vanished. The light in his hand had indeed gone out. But the taper in the rock still burned, within an inch, however, of its exit. He lighted another, and, saving the quenched fragment as before, commenced the ascent again. When would the interminable flight of steps cease, — that spiral agony? He toiled upward hour after hour until he was wearied almost to death. He was forced to pause at intervals and sit down. Human endurance was rapidly giving out. Human will remained steady and constant as a star. When, oh, when would that upward monotonous *tramp*, *tramp*, cease? At times the perspiration had started to his brow, and he had paused to catch his breath. At times he had sunk

again to sleep, but ever alert to secure his light from harm. The double exhaustion of his tapers at these episodes of sleep had alarmed him. Would they hold out? This became now the agony of thought, and accelerated his pace. He knew that he had traversed immense space in his ascent. He lighted his *last* taper in horror. This must light him to life, or fall extinguished over his grave. He strove by even, uniform steps to husband his strength and yet sacrifice no unnecessary time. The light burned lower and lower, and still he toiled upward on his winding way. The taper burned at last within two inches of his hand. He still ascended, finding no landing-place, and apparently as far from the floor of the Great Cave as ever. The light sank lower and lower towards his grasping hand. Its warmth already reached his thumb and finger. In another instant he could endure the heat no longer. Hope was going out in agony, physical and mental agony. The fire was burning him. He tore the fragments of tapers from his belt, and lighted them one by one, holding them aloft and pushing upward. He lighted the last fragment and held it high in darkness. Then, at the horror it revealed, he sank down upon the steps and the *light went out*. The stairway was covered with a yellow mass of rock which had fallen into it, completely blocking it up forever. He was in total darkness, and the lid of his mausoleum had been placed over him by the giant hand of nature.

That horrid pall of darkness no tongue can express. He prayed earnestly to God. In no danger, in no calamity, had faith in the goodness and wisdom of that divine Ruler of the universe forsaken him. Then he sat in the gloom of his vault and pondered a question of casuistry. Would it be wrong for him to seek an early and easy death? He must die by lingering agony. He must starve. One leap from the spiral stairs of stone would give him a speedy death before he reached the bottom of the pit. Would he offend God by seeking that early death, since death was inevitable? Had he the moral right to seek an easy and early death? He pondered the mental interrogatory addressed to his soul. He decided that the leap into space would be criminal. Scarcely had the question been decided, when he heard a rumbling overhead. Something was surely passing. He heard then a muffled call of a human being, and a response came from apparently a great distance. He arose and

shouted with all his strength. Alas! it brought no response. He drew his hammer from his belt, and, ascending the few steps that remained, dashed it into the rock above. To his amazement the hammer passed through the rock. It proved to be only a shell of crystallization. A few blows of the hammer cleared a space large enough for his head. He then broke away the covering until he could crawl up into the darkness above. He passed through the aperture, and saw that he was in a great cavern, and lights were passing away in the distance. He was about to call to the retreating lights, when his attention was attracted by a flash upon the stalactites near him. He turned, and beheld upon the summit of a white stalagmite cliff, a few rods from him, The Evening Star. Like Vesta, with a lamp in one hand and a steel-pointed staff in the other, stood Nacoochee upon the white cliff, with her hood thrown back, and gazing down into the little valley where the bewildered explorer stood in the darkness.

Chapter XLIX.

It grieves me
Much more, for what I cannot do for you.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE twelve hours passed by in silence, and no signal came from the pit below. The rope was exhausted, and the solitary mulatto stood by the windlass in meditation. He had examined a little silver watch which informed him that the appointed hour for raising the explorer had arrived. He had rested from his labors at intervals and applied himself vigorously to his meals in a little grotto near at hand. He had listened all the while for the report of the pistol. All had remained silent as the grave. No sound had attested the existence of human life in the abyss. Twice had he marvelled at the sound of distant thunder, which appeared to enter the "Deserted Chambers" from some cavern far away towards the entrance of the cave. It was strange that at this late season of the year a thunder-storm should be raging over the surface of the earth. He had taken a wonderful

fancy to his handsome employer, and longed to see him safely landed at the top of the Bottomless Pit. "I's afraid de debbil cotch Massa Earle if he don't quit dat hole mighty quick," he muttered to himself. Then he commenced, with feelings of relief, to raise the body of the far-off adventurer. The immense length of rope required all his strength to rewind it about the cylinder, so weighty had it become. He was forced frequently to attach the iron clogs and pause for rest. After long and tedious toiling, loading the cylinder with rope to its utmost capacity, and then carrying away the coils to the darkness in the background, he found that his labor was growing lighter. After a time, when the end of the rope in the pit could not have been a great distance away, he became terrified at the lightness of the weight he was raising. It seemed to him incredible that a man so firmly and powerfully knit together as the explorer should bear so lightly on the end of the rope. At length he detected a distant, feeble light coming up out of the darkness. Nearer and nearer it came, and the rope was becoming every moment lighter and lighter beyond all credence. A spasm of agony passed across that faithful heart. He feared what he dared not mutter aloud. That ominous lightness of the rope was fearfully suggestive of a dozen horrors. Perhaps Constant Earle had broken the rope. Perhaps he had unhooked it from his belt to examine more carefully lateral fissures, and while wandering away in caverns at the side the hook and rope had commenced their upward flight without him. Nearer and nearer came the light. Stephen discovered that it was burning dimly. Large and adequate for a prolonged exploration as it was, it was almost at the instant of its exit. He steadily drew it up to him, occasionally securing the clogs, and looking carefully down into the pit to discover what made the end of the rope so light. The dim lamp at length crashed against the edge of the cliff and was extinguished. Trembling with apprehension, the guide approached the spot to assist Earle up to terra firma. He called out in vain effort at cheerfulness, for his heart was sinking:—

"Well, Massa Earle, I hope dis affair gib you perfec. satisfaction. Bless my soul, I nebber see such geologicus pluck in my hole life."

No response came to this sally. He knelt down, placed his dark hand on the lamp, and drew the rope in to land.

An exclamation of horror escaped him. It was *broken*. His teeth chattered in terror; cold, clammy perspiration burst out upon his face; he arose and staggered backward, sank upon a rock, and, after a moment of fearful agony, burst into tears.

"O my God, Massa Earle's done gone forebber! Poor Massa Earle! O my God, poor man! and he say, Stephen, you be berry fine French scholar. Dem's his berry words; an he's done gone. De most admirablist gentleman dat ebber visited dis cabe."

He sat moaning and sobbing upon the rock for a long time; then he sat silently and sullenly in despair. Presently an idea struck him. He started up, removed his hat, and felt carefully of the bumps upon his skull. The osteological examination appeared to be satisfactory, for he uttered a grunt of approbation, and proceeded directly to the little grotto, and soon reappeared with a huge loaf of bread. He submitted the loaf to the same experimental trial with his fingers. Then he stood a moment more in reflection. It was manifest that his conclusions were involved in some uncertainty. He removed his hat again, tossed the loaf as high in air as his strong arm could project it, and received the full shock of it upon his skull as it came down. The loaf bounded away from the curly pate to the ground. He grinned at the gentle effect upon his cranium of the falling loaf. He then proceeded to the edge of the pit. He had demonstrated satisfactorily to himself the momentum and velocity of falling bodies. He gave the loaf a toss into the pit. According to his logic its fall could not harm the explorer if he were alive and at the bottom of the abyss. It might, on the contrary, be of material service to him; in fact, real manna to him in his subterranean wilderness. This novel method of provisioning the lower regions was persevered in until every fragment of bread, meat, matches, cigars, and comforts, that had been stowed away in the grotto, was hurled into the pit. Then he replenished the explorer's lamp, tied it under his felt hat, in the manner of a parachute, and, lighting it, hurled it into the abyss, sacrificing his hat on the altar of friendship. This was not the limit of his zeal. He procured wood from his place of deposit in the cave, and setting fire to the pile hurled the blazing sticks down into the darkness, shouting, "Look out dar, Massa Earle!" Every available assistance that his honest

heart could imagine was hurled into the pit. Then, with becoming Christian philosophy, after he cleared away the windlass and ropes into the grotto, he took up his own lamp and moved away barehead, saying aloud, "De rest is wid de Lord. If it were foreordained dat Massa Earle's goin' to lib, he's a-goin' to lib. If de udder way, den one of dem logs'll gib him de *coup de grâce*."

With this orthodox soliloquy he sought the regions of daylight.

Chapter L.

O love! who to the hearts of wandering men
Art as the calm to ocean's weary waves!

SHELLEY.

"AH! Nacoochee, this is a strange meeting after our long separation! The time has been tedious indeed to me. I began to fear I should never see you again. But is it possible you never saw my advertisements?"

"Advertisements? What can you mean by that, Mr. Earle?"

"Not seen them, Nacoochee? Why, I left no stone unturned to find you. In the 'Personal' of every paper likely to meet your eye I addressed communications to you as Nacoochee, begging for your address."

"How unfortunate! I never read anything under that head, Mr. Earle. But why did you wish to communicate with me? I supposed, after the cavalier manner of your leaving the school-room when you knew I was coming, that you would care little for any further communication with me."

"Is it possible that you have been all this dreary time brooding over a slight that was never intended? Oh, how far you have mistaken my character! I imagined that I had created respect in your mind, but it appears that I have utterly failed, and you have regarded me as a vacillating and unreliable man, who could drop on the instant an acquaintance for whom I had expressed the highest regard. So utterly precipitate were you in your cruel conjecture, that I

cannot reconcile it with your subsequent kindness in sending me that beautiful ring. See here, where it should have rested until the day of my death."

He drew the ring from a pocket of his vest, exclaiming: —

"That is the dearest treasure I have ever received in life. I have cherished it there close beside my heart. To me it has been life, hope, a talisman against despair; but now you have rendered it utterly valueless to me by your opinion of my character. I would not keep that ring now, — no! not if it were a shield to save my life. Take it. You have mocked me by presenting it. It was the emblem of respect, but you have made it hateful to me by believing that I abandoned a friend without apology, turned my back upon a friend as if she had been a brute. Take it; it burns my hand."

He flung the ring into her lap in bitterness, and turned away.

She sprang to her feet: —

"Stay, Mr. Earle! for God's sake, stay! There is something wrong! Hear me, I beseech you! Do not leave me so!"

Her voice trembled with emotion. She stood so queenly and yet with an expression of such anguish in her pleading eyes that he turned back to her side and looked earnestly at her.

"Why do you say," he exclaimed, bitterly, "that something is wrong? Wrong is it? Ay! atrociously wrong. I never had man or woman doubt me before. You have charged me with that which makes my blood boil. Treated *you* cavalierly, one whom I had crowned with the sacred name, *friend! I* desert a friend without a word, without a sign, without a cause! How *dare* you accuse me of this? If you had called me coward, it would not have been a greater insult. I cannot stay unless you explain your meaning, and that right quickly too. My blood will not allow me the requisite calmness to speak properly to a lady. Treated you cavalierly? Never."

"O Mr. Earle, I never saw you enraged before! Do not look at me so sternly! But tell me why did you not wait for me that night?"

"Wait for you? Wait for you? I waited for you long beyond the time you had ever tarried before. I paced up and

down that lonely school-room like a madman. I waited in the hall and at the street door in agony until I thought my heart would break. I waited until hope had vanished and desolation overwhelmed me like the sea. I waited long, long, until every nerve in my body was agony, and then I walked away so desolate. so lonely. But filled with anguish as I was that I was to lose you, having no address where I could write, I never lost my respect for *you*. I never doubted *your* friendship and sincerity. I knew you were ill, or otherwise necessarily detained, and so I went away in despair. Nacoochee, woman as you are, with all the traditional intensity of a woman's nature, you can never feel the agony that I felt when I paced up and down before that door until the last hope of your coming had indeed vanished."

His voice trembled as he stood there so tall and beautiful in the lamp-lighted cavern, and the earnestness of his suffering touched her heart. She placed her gloved hand upon his arm as she spoke: —

"Forgive me! Oh, forgive me for doubting you! I came late and you were gone. Do you not allow anything for the delicacy of a woman's nature? Was it not natural for a woman to fancy that she was treated slightingly when you had left and no communication was there to be found in explanation? You left no note, no message for me."

"True, Nacoochee. But I had reason to suppose that you would not come at so unusually late an hour. I forgive you with all my heart. But you cannot conceive my desolation when I had to leave without bidding you farewell."

Her beautiful eyes filled with an earnest inquiry as they regarded him. At length she spoke calmly and sweetly, as if a cloud had passed away from her heart.

"Your consideration for a person like me is so grateful and sweet that I know not how to express my gratitude. I know not what you find in me to chain your regard. We shall indeed be friends now. *Yo haré cuanto esté de mi parte para merecer la buena opinion de V.*"

"It will require no effort, dear Nacoochee," he replied, passionately, "to deserve my good opinion. It has already passed that limit. I love you passionately, madly. I dream of you at night. It tortures my waking thoughts that there may be something now to prevent my words reaching your heart. Oh, I love you! My soul reaches forth to you in entreaty to return that love. I cannot live

without your love. Do you love me? Will you, can you love me?"

She trembled, that gifted, noble girl, as he stood before her with every intensity of his passion burning in his magnetic eyes. Who could refuse that prince of beauty and intellectual power that passionate request? Her large, beautiful, startled eyes drooped their lids at his sudden and eager gaze.

"Mr. Earle, you forget that you are addressing a poor girl of whom you really know little. You startle me by your evident earnestness. I respect you too much ever to doubt you again. But my love is not that which would naturally be your expectation. Your family is proud and of high social position. Your talent is rapidly elevating you to an exalted literary position. Propriety should induce you to seek a love in your own class of society."

She did not succeed in speaking to the end with the unruffled calmness with which she had begun. He detected the tremulousness of her manner at the concluding sentence, and spoke then rapidly and vehemently, taking her hand which she did not withdraw from his grasp suddenly, but gently.

"Tell me that you love me, Nacoochee, — dear, darling, precious Nacoochee, — and leave everything else out of your sentence. Speak only that word, and I am a monarch. Oh, I love you, I love you. Can you refuse my love, which is yours forever? Speak, for God's sake speak!"

He caught her hand again. It rested unresistingly now in his. She did not speak. Something caused her to quiver like the leaf. He passed his arm about her waist and drew her to him with the lion's firmness.

"Speak, dear love! my life, my life, speak!"

She raised her muffled face to his. Her eyes opened upon his. They were resplendent with that utter and intense abandonment of passionate love which fills the heart to suffocation. She adored him. He pressed burning kisses upon her beautiful lips till her head fell upon his breast.

"Tell me that you love me! tell me!"

She threw both arms about his neck and murmured, softly, "How well you know it now."

They were interrupted by the confusion of approaching voices. New lights were flashing along the stalactite vaults of the cavern. Nacoochee's friends were approaching

the place where she had paused, exhausted by her miles of tramping, and promised to guard the baskets of provision which were to cover the extemporized dining-table of the exploring party. They were returning, these gay companions of her visit, and the merry voices of ladies mingled in the confused sounds which followed the lamp of the guide.

She raised her head from his breast.

"You must leave me, Mr. Earle, before they see you. I pleaded fatigue and preferred to rest here. If they should find you with me they might imagine that I had some secret appointment here and my fatigue was a *ruse*."

"Then give me your address, darling, that I may go at once to you after your return to the city."

She tore a leaf from a little journal which she carried with her for the purpose of noting down all that was of interest in the cave, and, writing the address for him, gave it to him, saying: —

"See, they are going off into another avenue. I recollect now that they were to explore still another cave before their return."

"Yes, thank God, they are!" he exclaimed. "This dear moment will be prolonged a little. Sit down here again and talk to me."

They were soon engaged in that sweet, exquisite converse which succeeds the doubt and the declaration of love. Her hand rested in his, and she said at length, after arrangements had been perfected for their meetings in the metropolis, and the amethyst ring had been restored to him: —

"Your book has been a wonderful success already. You should have heard those ladies who are with me raving about The Cave of Cheiron only a few moments ago. Something in this cave suggested your book."

"And do you like it, then, Nacoochee? Is it an improvement on my last effort?"

"You will not doubt my motive, Mr. Earle, when I say that it is charming. It is more than that. A gentleman in yonder party remarked that it was learned and 'abored as the Complutensian Polyglot of Ximenes. This occasioned no little amusement at the expense of a lady in the party who is wonderfully *au courant* of general literature. She had forgotten even the name of the cardinal, and it was the first allusion that she was forced to acknowledge her ignorance of. Your kind advice regarding Spanish literature

has opened a new world of literary delight to me. That wonderful man and his famous University of Alcalá have stolen many hours from my sleep."

"And you still are the same vehement aspirant after learning, Nacoochee?"

"Yes, indeed. The passion grows by indulgence. But I am so proud of your attainments that I have studied unflaggingly in order to keep up with your books. Your ambition is so exalted,—too noble to be dazzled by the false lights of an ephemeral popularity."

"Thank you, my own darling one. Now I have every motive that could stimulate man to persevere. The pleasure of success has been seriously marred by the absence of your appreciation and encouragement."

"And have you never fancied, Mr. Earle, that you could be happy in the love of the beautiful favorites of fortune by whom you have been surrounded and flattered?"

"No, no, Nacoochee!" he replied, earnestly. "I have been as faithful to your memory as the hamadryad to her tree. Did you never hear of the constancy of the nightingale? Are you familiar with Jami?"

"No. I must acknowledge my ignorance."

"Then listen to this quotation: 'You may place a hundred handfuls of fragrant herbs and flowers before the nightingale, yet he wishes not in his constant heart for more than the sweet breath of his beloved rose.'"

"You are like the Hindu Cama," she whispered. "All your arrows are tipped with flowers."

He drew her head close to his breast, and they sat for a moment in that exquisite silence which is measured only by happy heart-beats. Then a sudden burst of music swelled along the caverns, thrilling and wild in that subterranean darkness.

"What in the world is that, Nacoochee?"

"Only our band, Mr. Earle. The party is very large, and the gentlemen insisted upon employing a brass band to accompany us. The effect of music under some of the domes is wonderful. I have found myself several times thrilled beyond all expression with the music stealing away along the avenues. We had music also on the rivers as we crossed them."

"How wonderful, beyond all extravagant description, is this cave!" he replied. "I have visited the famous cave of

Loubiére, and spent hours in exploring its mysteries, its crystals, its arches, altars, churches, elephants, horses, and fiery dragons. I am familiar, too, with the caverns of Gayleuruth in Germany. I have travelled nine hours under ground through the Grotto Roland; but this Mammoth Cave, — oh, this glory of America! It will be my arsenal of imaginative description for my lifetime. If ever the hour comes when my fancy droops her wing, I have only to recall this pride of Kentucky, and images of sublimity and beauty will start up in myriad groups."

"It is indeed a dream of majesty," she replied. "Do you know, I have been affixing titles of my own to white stalagmites which the guides pay no attention to. I discovered one girl, fashioned from this white rock, which reminded me of the Scandinavian ideal of virginity, Falla. So I took the liberty of writing her down in my journal as such. Her tresses were bound with a yellow band so like to gold as to justify my conceit. Then I found near her Gesione, who admitted dead virgins into her heavenly train. Those Northmen had many beautiful conceits. I found also their three virgins seated under an oak, — oh, such a perfect likeness of a tree! Do you remember them, sitting there, and disposing of the fates of men? Well, I saw them too! And I saw something else that perhaps escaped your searching, poetic eye; no more nor less than the Scandinavian *white ladies*. Do you remember them gliding over the lakes like a pillar of mist, or sitting at midnight in the freezing shadow of the pines, and singing, with low, soft voices, the Runic hymns? You needn't smile at my fancy. I did see them too. I saw them in one of the caves just as distinctly as you saw the Pine Apple Bush. They were gliding along the wall in one stalactite, and sitting under the pine in another. But here come the party. But tell me what is the matter, do you suppose, with the best guide through the cave, Stephen? We met him yesterday going out of the cave bareheaded and utterly broken down. Something had happened to him, but he wouldn't speak a word."

"Yesterday, did you say, — yesterday? Are you *sure* it was yesterday?"

"Why, certainly! This is the second day we have visited the cave. It was yesterday of course that we met him going out."

How amazed was the explorer at the flight of time in his

terrible adventure under the cave! He suppressed his excitement at the intelligence and turned the conversation. Then, pressing her once more passionately in his arms, he obeyed her request and withdrew to a place of concealment, until the departing figures of the party should be the signal for him to emerge from his retreat and follow them out of the cave. Nacoochee supposed her lover had a torch and the means of lighting it. She was not yet to share that secret which had placed at his disposal fabulous wealth.

Concealed behind a mass of rock which had fallen from the roof of the cavern, he watched the gay party gather about Nacoochee and proceed to arrange their dinner upon the rocks. He caught the sounds of mirth in the distance, and heard one of the gentlemen propose the health of "the nun." He was certain the idol of his life must be called by that name in the *abandon* of the exploring party. After a time he saw them all take up their torches, and, preceded by the band playing an inspiring march, depart for the mouth of the cave. He stole forth from his hiding-place and followed them. They were a long time in reaching the entrance, in consequence of many delays in inspecting new wonders of the place. At last, however, the exploration was over, and they passed on into the antechamber, and then filed along the narrow avenue which led to the mouth. He tarried just behind them until they had passed away upward to the surface of the earth, and then with feelings of relief mounted the steps into daylight after them. Once more in the region lighted by the sun! The sense of freedom was glorious, but terrible indeed was the sudden rush of the cold outer air, the fearfully powerful oppression of the atmosphere. He had been traversing an air beneath the earth so mild, balmy, and equal, that the consumptive patient who will tarry there a few months will be restored to health and strength. But, alas! such recovery is limited to the cave. An exit from it immediately restores the disease. He believed this statement when the oppressive character of the external atmosphere nearly bore him to the earth. For several moments he labored under difficulty in breathing. At length, however, he became accustomed to external air and gazed about him. The autumn was far advanced. Not a solitary leaf clung to tree or vine, but the air was mild, mild in the estimation of one reared in the bracing climate of New York. No doubt, as he stood there

gazing about him, with the slanting rays of the setting sun shimmering over the dead and fallen leaves, in parts of his own native State the snow was flying and ice had bound the lakes and streams.

He had much to accomplish before the confusion and life of the great metropolis should again meet his eye. He was the sole possessor of a secret, the consciousness of which made his blood tingle. Unbounded wealth was his. Only a careful and patient ordeal was requisite to place him in contact with it again. He must traverse that cave with guides again and again, until familiarity should make him master of its intricacies. When he could safely traverse the cave alone, then could he descend, with abundant light and provision, the antediluvian stairway and remove the gold as he had occasion for it. Secrecy, patience, and labor were requisite to remove the precious metal. It would never do to excite the suspicion of the guides. He must always enter as if on missions of scientific or geological discovery. In time he could remove vast wealth to the mints of his country, and receive in return the coinage of his government. Wealth had brought all its traditionary responsibilities and cares. He had promised God to use it wisely. He had been rescued by the Omnipotent Arm in every venture of life. He had been trained in adversity. Literary honor had come to him. Now he was entrusted with the stewardship of wealth; it was yet to be seen whether he was grateful and would employ it for the assistance of the poor, the struggling, the gifted, the scientific, the needy of every class. He had nobly battled with poverty and triumphed. Would he rise victor over the temptations of wealth?

He sat long upon a bank of earth covered with leaves and pondered his future. He must find some way to close the mouth of Stephen, who would no doubt take him for an apparition from the realms of death. Then came the memory of the gifted daughter of poverty whose love he had won; and then, like an eternal finger of reproach, returned for the first time the memory of his promise to his sister, his proud, afflicted sister. He had acted impulsively when his eyes rested upon the face of the girl he loved. His heart went forth to her and was made happy. Now came the distress of his violated promise. His sister would never consent to so palpable a *mésalliance*. An Earle wed with a governess without position and obscure! How would the proud head

toss in disdain! How could he look in the face of his beautiful sister? Nacoochee he would never desert now; she was his already. In confusion and eagerness he hastened away to the hotel to see her again. At the office he learned to his amazement that the party had already gone.

Chapter LI.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all.

LONGFELLOW.

A GROUP of ladies and gentlemen were standing upon the deck of an ocean steamer. Some were leaving for England; the others had collected to bid them farewell. Miss Delano and her uncle, the Reverend Thomas Delano, were present; also the restless, nervous Colonel Baldgrave. The latter gentleman was to lose forever the child he had adopted. The mother of little Violet had claimed her child from the colonel, upon evidence of its parentage which was incontrovertible. The first nurse of the child had established its identity with the offspring of James H. Neville — now proved to be an assumed name of Robert Melville — and his wife by a secret marriage, Louisa Earle. The beautiful and elegant mother of little Violet stood apart in earnest and apparently confidential conversation with the heiress, the godmother of her child. She was arrayed in deep mourning. Lord Carnochan, who had claimed her in behalf of the family of the deceased marquis, had declared to her his firm belief that her husband, who was heir to the estates, had met with sudden and mysterious death, perhaps had been drowned in some night attempt to board the vessel in which he had stated to her his intention to embark for England. Lord Carnochan had finally discovered the wife of his missing relative through the letters and advertisements dictated by Constant Earle, although his first suspicions of the truth were excited by the vigilant researches of the detective, Fagan. He had made himself known to Mrs. Melville, stated to her his apprehensions regarding her husband's fate, and persuaded her that her duty to her little daughter de

manded that she should immediately proceed with him to England and claim the valuable estates of the deceased marquis in behalf of Violet. The agonizing suspicions in her own mind regarding her husband's death seemed to be confirmed. She donned her widow's weeds and placed herself under the guardianship of Lord Carnochan. Her child had become heiress to great wealth, and her own condition pecuniarily was satisfactory as the widow of Robert Melville. Her departure was hastened by the suggestions of her husband's relative, and from him she obtained an advance of funds which she transmitted to her brother Constant, absent in Kentucky, and wrote to him urging his immediate return to the city, that he might follow her in the next steamer. She was going among strangers and needed his presence and counsel beyond the sea.

Miss Delano was aware of the real motive which prompted Lord Carnochan in accelerating the departure of the widow for England. She and her uncle had been on confidential terms with that nobleman for a long time. The trio had been consulted frequently by the vigilant and persistent Fagan regarding the movements of the suspected murderer. Every fact that the heiress was possessed of had been communicated to the detective in the presence and by the advice of her uncle and Lord Carnochan. That astute agent of the police could approach Montrose Earle readily, from his previous and frequent employment by that gentleman on private business of his own. But so adept was he at disguises and changes of voice that he had been introduced to Montrose Earle as a traveller of distinction, and had actually on several occasions been admitted to the private and elegant apartments adjoining the residence of the clergyman. He had looked there in vain for the mysterious machinery whose hum came at times so distinctly through the walls to the ears of Miss Delano and her uncle. His professional skill had been utterly baffled by the sounds. He had been admitted to the library of the clergyman and heard himself the click of machinery. But no machinery was to be found in the elegant suite of rooms when he visited them as the distinguished traveller from abroad. Once or twice Montrose Earle had left him in possession of his library ostensibly engaged in learned research. He had improved such opportunity to sound the partition wall of the houses for secret chambers where the murder might have been committed

and the machinery might be concealed. All efforts to fathom the mystery had proved abortive. The note found by the ladies in Montrose Earle's apartments had been identified by Lord Carnochan as in the handwriting of his missing relative. The indefatigable Fagan had even gained access to the Indian and Arabic museum at "Silvicola," and identified the handwriting in the book as the chirography of Robert Melville. But in addition to these facts he had discovered that Earle had travelled in foreign lands with the missing man, known to him then as James H. Neville.

It had been decided finally to secure the arrest of the suspected murderer, and thereupon institute a thorough search of his private apartments for the watch which had been presented to the missing man by Lord Carnochan, and which contained in one of its covers a miniature of that nobleman. The latter gentleman desired to spare Mrs. Melville at present the double shock of hearing that her husband was probably murdered and her own brother had been arrested for the crime. If any testimony on her part should prove to be essential finally, the sad intelligence could be broken to her gradually. The preliminary investigation might result favorably to the accused, and then there would be no necessity of her ever knowing anything of the affair. These considerations had prompted the action of the nobleman in hastening her departure.

How strange the vicissitudes of fortune in the brief history of the blue-eyed, golden-haired little girl, the beautiful, gentle Violet, who stood beside Colonel Baldgrave receiving the parting caresses of the kind gentleman whom she had already learned to regard as her father. His eyes filled with tears at her farewell prattle, as she stood there in wild wonder, gazing at the shipping and speculating in her artless way upon the great ocean which she was about to cross. How well he recalled the scenes which now were at an end! No more would he witness those teachings of her beautiful godmother, his ardent friend. No more would May Delano behold her exquisite godchild in the attitude of infant prayer, and recalling the lines: —

"Thus did she kneel, lisping sacred names,
And looking, while her hands and eyes
Are lifted to the glowing skies,
Like a stray babe of Paradise,
Just lighted on the flowery plain,
And seeking for its home again."

The young life, daily developing in new beauties and graces, had passed, from the position of a little stray left by the hands of poverty where wealth could shield it, to the exalted place of an English heiress of noble blood. It was hard to part with her on the part of those who had sheltered her through the days of darkness. But she was safe again under the care of those eyes which had borne her in sight, which had known her peaceful home, and ached so long at that distance which had been created by a father's hand and a father's proud command. The colonel at last parted from the clinging child and hastened away to conceal his emotion. May Delano gave a parting and affectionate kiss to the calm, beautiful mother, turned to the child and gathered her in her arms for the last time, and then giving her hand to Lord Carnochan in farewell left the steamer with her uncle.

The trio watched from the shore the receding sweep of the vessel, slowly fading away into indistinctness, till human forms were no longer distinguishable, and then sought their respective homes.

Scarcely had the heiress and her uncle gained the steps of their home when they saw Fagan emerge from the adjacent house, the property of Montrose Earle, and with a dejected air pause upon the steps as if in indecision. Recognizing the two as they mounted the steps this apt pupil of Herod and Fouché called to them to stop, and coming to them gave them the substance of a mystery which no one could fathom. The officers who had come with him to make the arrest of the suspected murderer could find no trace of him, and were informed to their utter amazement that his rooms had not been occupied for several weeks. Mrs. Secor, Fagan's authority, had noticed for several days that Montrose Earle did not leave his rooms and that the servants from the restaurant could gain no admittance to them. All was silent within. She had listened day after day for the sound of his footsteps within, but no one appeared to be moving inside. She had arrived long ago at the conclusion that he had taken himself off suddenly to "Silvicola," or perhaps to Europe, and had advised those who furnished his meals to come no more until the owner of the rooms should appear. The police-officers had just broken in his door, and found everything in confusion upon the table of his library, and articles of dress scattered about his apartments as if they had been in use the day before. Everything indicated that the

owner must have vacated the suite of rooms in great haste, placing nothing in order, leaving everything as if it had been in use five minutes before. It was evident that he had suddenly fled, perhaps forewarned of the arrest which had been meditated. According to the statements of Mrs. Secor he must have vanished weeks before. Everything had been unlocked or forced open by the officers of the law, and none of the articles discovered which Lord Carnochan had presented to Robert Melville. No new or suspicious evidence was elicited from the inspection of his rooms and cabinets. Everything was as elegant, calm, and beautiful as this celebrated dilettante could render it. The front room was as gay and artistic, the library as scholarly, and the silver-and-white sleeping-chamber as pure and lovely as ever. The *habitués* of the avenue saw him no more. His stables were still in the possession of his Arabian grooms. His accounts at the banks were in favorable condition. No funds had been quietly withdrawn. On the contrary, he had made heavy deposits just before his disappearance. His servants in the city and at "Silvicola" knew nothing of his whereabouts. His disappearance was apparently as much of a mystery to them as to the police. This *denoûement* ended the arrest. Lord Carnochan was informed across the Atlantic that the bird had flown. Public rewards were offered for the discovery of the wealthy and elegant savant, but in vain. He never appeared in New York again. The attorney who conducted the management of many of Montrose Earle's investments ascertained the address of the younger brother, and by letter advised him to return at once to the city and take possession of his brother's estates on behalf of himself and his sister, as he feared that Montrose had been murdered and his body flung into the river. The last reliable item of information regarding the missing man was that he was seen late in the evening walking towards one of the city ferries.

Constant Earle, still occupied in his secret pursuits in connection with the Great Cave, returned at once to the city, and, taking possession of his brother's property, advertised widely for the recovery of his body. No further tidings were gained of the lost man. He never reappeared upon the scenes where he had received the flattery and consideration of the *crême de la crême*. The whole estate of Montrose Earle finally devolved upon Constant and Louisa Earle

"Silvicola," the old homestead, became, upon a final division of the property, the estate of the younger brother.

One of the first letters which came to the hands of the author upon his return from Kentucky was a communication from the printer's wife, announcing the death of her husband and that his property had been willed to her. She desired him to take possession at once of the proceeds of Polymnia which had become or should become due, as they were his lawful property and she knew he needed the money. To this epistle, written in the simplicity and honesty of her Christian heart, he returned answer that God had blessed him with wealth and she should forever own the proceeds of the sales of that book, but that he desired the publisher to announce in the public press, under the head *Palmam qui meruit ferat*, that Constant Earle was the real author of that work. Then making his preparations for a speedy pursuit of his sister to England he hastened away to fulfil his engagement with Nacoochee. The evening was at hand when she had promised to be in the city and give an audience to her lover.

. . . . . .

"Oh, this night, this beautiful night! You can have no conception of it, Carrie, without being out in the air away from the buildings where you can see a broad stretch of steel-blue sky, in which every star is an oasis. I never know on this dear Christmas night whether to cry or laugh, so many emotions press upon my heart. The memory of the dead who have passed such happy Christmas days with me always comes back in anguish. But then that sweet, glorious, melting memory of our dear Lord, who came to earth for our salvation! Every unkind thought, every ungenerous word that has ever been spoken of me by my friend or foe is swept away in forgiveness on this night."

"You are excited, May," was the response. "I am so glad to see you enthusiastic once more. Your sad, serious eyes have haunted me so long. The church always does you good you come back so much lighter of heart."

"Ah! but you should have seen my dear crowd of orphan children winding away from the church, and then their delight at the Christmas-tree. Poor little souls! my heart bleeds for them on this night! I remember my own mother so vividly and the glorious time she always made of Christmas for me. Ah! forgive me, dear Carrie, for touching this wound again."

She sat down beside the motherless girl, whose eyes filled with tears, and folding her tenderly in her arms soothed her in low, sweet accents.

"It will soon be over, darling, this earth agony and unrest, and then the Eternal Presence, our mothers, sisters, friends, eternally united and radiant. Oh, do you know I believe the angels are nearer us to-night than any other time in the year save only when we receive Holy Communion? The Persians call Christmas-night *scheb jaldai*, the clear and luminous night, because of the descent of the angels. How the remotest corners of the earth testify to the glorious memory of the Virgin and her child! Do you know that Jesus in the lap of Mary was carved on one of the pillars of the Caaba?"

"No," she replied, raising her head from the shoulder of her friend. "I never associated anything of truth with the religion of the Mohammedans."

"Yes, the crescent has also been tributary to the honor of Christ. They acknowledge Jesus as one of their six great prophets. But tell me, Carrie, about your marriage now. You promised to tell me everything when I returned from church."

"The day for the wedding is appointed. We are to be married on the fifteenth of June. You are to be of course first, and Lottie Chambers second bridemaid."

"And you are to live at home?"

"Yes, father would consent on no other terms. He is so lonely."

"We shall have great times making preparations, Carrie. Now I want to unfold one of my plans to you. I have just completed a contract for the erection of a brick building for the education of my orphans. You will be delighted with the plan. I will bring it to you to-morrow. I intend to present it to the church by my will. But during my life I aim to have the management and control of it. I expect to delegate certain powers to several ladies, of whom you are to be first named. These parties are to divide the responsibility of visiting and looking after my teachers, whom I am to compensate for their services, and also to report upon the condition of the orphans. My own time will be engrossed with my retreat for old and helpless women. Oh! I forgot to tell you about the fracas at St. ———. The rector is a high churchman, but his assistant, Rev. James Faber, who

takes sides with uncle, committed the *faux pas* of introducing some ceremonial innovations without consulting the rector. I happened to overhear some criticisms which were rather *piquant*. The result will be that Mr. Faber will be sent somewhere else."

"But you sympathize, May, with this ritualistic movement."

"No, I do not!" was the emphatic response. "Not until the assembled authority of the church sanction it, and so I have told uncle. The alterations in many respects would gratify my ideas of taste and propriety. When the church speaks then I am bound in the spirit and interest of Christian unity to obey. The church is the light in the darkness and uncertainty of the world for us to look to and honor. Our individual opinions as our standards of action are unreliable guides. I believe the national church of our country to be just, holy, and wise. The assembly of our bishops, laity, and clergy have acknowledged authority to change our ceremonial. When they act, then I follow. I am apprehensive of the results of individual alterations before our great central authority indicates our course. Much as I honor uncle's zeal and piety I cannot endorse his ideas yet. There he comes now! I must leave you for a moment to prepare something for him. He has been worked almost to death for the last fifteen hours. I shall return soon."

Miss Deming watched her lithe figure as she hastened away. Miss Delano was dressed in deep mourning for the death of her noble Christian friend, Carrie's mother. The hour to fulfil her promise to the dying had arrived. Henceforth her conduct must be so trained in the way of holiness that the motherless might not be led astray after false lights of frivolity and sin. Her friend sat in silence and reverie gazing out upon the stars. "How admirably May holds up under some distress which is guarded from me! I believe her faith and trust in God will soothe her to peace at last. Who *can* it be? She was as serene and brilliant as ever last night. It could not have been any of those callers. Poor, dear May! She is going to be a saint."

Chapter LII.

> And yet my one lover
> I've conned thee an answer, it waits thee to-night.
>
> JEAN INGELOW.

No wonder the ancient children of Teutates prayed by the silver light of the moon and entitled her *the fair mute*. Something suggestive of purity and heaven steals down her gentle rays and enters the unresisting heart. A shadowy figure sat in the window, and her upturned face was whitened by the soft radiance. Selene came to the calm, pale, half-muffled countenance, as of yore she smiled enamored on the beauty of the sleeping Endymion. As the silent girl dreamed on of the only one who had ever touched her heart the clock on the adjacent avenue slowly and solemnly tolled *eight*. She started up in anxiety from her vigil, and pressing her white bound forehead to the cold glass peered down the street. A familiar figure was walking rapidly up the street towards the house. He was coming prompt as a man of business to his love. Wealth had not diverted him, then, from one whom the world pitied. The acquisition of "Silvicola" and half of the great Earle estate had not estranged his faithful heart from the governess. Oh, how sweet and precious a love was that which faltered not in the face of poverty and partial mutilation, but was born and lived only on appreciation of the soul and intellect! How she could pour her heart treasures out before such a man, so constant and royal a lover!

His ring at the bell was nervous and quick, and Nacoochee, closing the inside shutter upon the moon, walked away to the inner *salon* and sat in the gas-light like a pale, patient nun.

Yes, the governess was in, and he could see her at once in the drawing-room. In the eagerness of love he pressed forward past the servant, and entering the apartment stood before her. A blush stole to her cheek at his ardent greeting, and she said in slight trepidation: —

"Who could have dreamed that you could be so punctual on so long an appointment?"

"Had I the hundred and forty pair of wings of the Mo-

hammedan Gabriel I could not fly too fast to your arms. The heart was here long before me, Nacoochee. The last hour has seemed to drag most wofully along. My darling, my darling, are you glad that I have come?"

He sat beside her on the sofa, and drew her to him as he spoke.

"You know, Mr. Earle."

"Call me no longer by that name, but by the dearest title you can think of on earth."

"My life! my life! That is the name you gave me in the cave; that is the dearest name, for that alone tells all."

"I have brought you, sweetest Nacoochee, a ring. Tell me if it pleases you. Here in the same box you will find a diamond brooch. It was so clear and beautiful I was sure you would accept it from me now. Do not refuse me, but take it now."

What woman ever sat long with an unopened box of diamonds in her hand? She removed the white, silky-looking paper, opened the box, and saw a *solitaire* stone in a ring, exquisitely clear but not ostentatious in size. His taste forbade display in a ring. She laid it aside, as she said, softly, "And this for a poor governess. Would you turn my head?"

Then, as he spoke not, but only studied her countenance, she proceeded to examine the larger object which rested at the bottom of the box. It was secured in a velvet case. She pressed the spring and instantly exclaimed, "That is the most magnificent stone I ever saw, the largest, the most brilliant! Oh, how beautiful! But, Mr. Earle, you have done an unwise act in my judgment. That stone must contain a fortune in itself."

It was a single stone, as large and dazzling as that Sansy diamond which was found on the battle-field in the sword-hilt fallen from the dying hand of Charles le Temeraire.

"Why have you brought this to me, Mr. Earle?"

"Because, Nacoochee, if my eager heart must only keep pace with the calm, slow tread of fashion and etiquette, it will go mad. I adore you, I love you, beyond your wildest dream. I long to cast everything at your feet: wealth, life, honor, everything must pass into your keeping before I can be happy. Oh, speak to me, darling, in the burning language of my own heart! Tell me that every fiery throb meets a response in yours. Tell me; my heart is famished for words of love. I crave, like the long wanderer in the

desert dying of thirst, a cup, a drop of drink. Oh, give it to me fresh from the fountain of your lips! Give it to me, I entreat you."

He drew her face to his and kissed her eagerly, passionately. She would have struggled away, but he was irresistible. She was a straw in his muscular grasp.

"You must listen to me, Mr. Earle. I have something very serious to say to you before I yield myself up to you forever. I have deceived you, and until everything is made evident to you it is improper that you should abandon yourself so completely to love. Will you desist now out of consideration for my feelings?"

"*Dès à présent!*" was the annoyed response. "What can you mean, Nacoochee, by so peremptory a manner?"

"Listen to me, and you shall know directly. What is it that you love?"

"*You! you!*"

"Yes; but what is the object of your love, — my heart?"

"Yourself, as you are, *Nacoochee;* your heart, your intellect, your person, all that constitutes you, the you that was my scholar, that came to me, listened to me, and above all that counselled me so wisely and so well."

"And yet you did not know my family, my friends, Mr. Earle. You have perhaps been too delicately nerved to pry into my affairs. Would you love me if crime was associated, not with me, but with my relatives?"

He looked at her earnestly, and then said: —

"Certainly. If you are innocent, truthful, and sincere, and only unfortunate in your relatives, I should love you without wavering."

"You will love the governess, then, forever?"

"*Forever*," he repeated after her.

"But I have deceived you, Mr. Earle, and when I have explained everything you shall be at liberty to discard me if you please."

"Very good! — go on, Nacoochee. You will find that my love has enveloped you as you are, so that unless you are guilty of dishonor I shall hold you to my heart forever."

"Do not be so positive, Mr. Earle. You have to pass through an ordeal of your affection which you little dream of."

"I do not fear, dear Nacoochee. Go on with your dis-

closures. Keep me in anxiety away from your arms no longer."

She approached the table in trepidation. He could see that she trembled violently. She paused under the gaslight, tore the white bandages from her forehead and cheeks, threw the black covering from her head, and *May Delano stood before him.* The softest, richest chestnut hair covered her head, the fairest, purest skin, unharmed and beautiful, appeared to him, and like a princess, exceedingly proud and lovely, she stood regarding him.

For an instant he was paralyzed. His senses were at fault He saw a paleness like death cross her face. Instantly he opened his arms to her. She saw the blessed sign of undying love, and with a quick, eager word of joy she was clasped to his heart.

Chapter LIII.

——— his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces command.

KING HENRY V.

WHEN Archimedes indicated his knowledge of the lever, by his famous declaration, "Give me where I may stand, and I will move the world," there is no reason to believe that he was advised of the existence of Constant Earle's inexhaustible gold mine. The omnipotent power of capital has been the development of a later age. Seldom has that power been more judiciously wielded than by the scholar and author who penetrated the sumptuous treasury of Pluto in the Occident. His financial power was felt in every great commercial mart. Where an honest enterprise needed support his purse was freely opened. Where a moneyed knave mercilessly ground the faces of the poor and ruined honest men of slighter means, he appeared on the scene for that man, like the Polish deity, Poëhwist (the cloudy sky). Storms followed his advent "on the street." The Christian religion inculcates *justice.* Give to each man his own, says the upright casuist. But the tenor of this noble life was *mercy.* The poor need employment, recreation, and air; the vicious,

encouragement, kind sympathy, and the removal of temptation. Both classes received his attention and his name became beautiful on quivering lips. There are tens of thousands who struggle and fail who are neither indolent nor vicious. God disposes of the fates of men. The great modern doctrine that *thrift* is God is a monstrous heresy. Men fail daily who deserve to succeed. Courts of equity were established for the adjustment of those cases where law was deficient by reason of its universality. Christ established the court of charity, which issues mitigative decrees for all men.

Constant Earle had struggled for bread in a garret. His heart knew how to open toward all students in garrets. He knew full well that merit has many falls, and that some men must starve between those falls before the halcyon days of success come on. Where would his literary success have been manifest, had not Madame Benon rescued him from death beneath the dingy rafters? His brave, noble heart opened towards all authors. They were his kinsmen in suffering. One of the first and noblest monuments of his charity was a home for authors. A great building was opened for those whom his trustees, all literary men, should pronounce patient, virtuous toilers in the field of letters. They were given, when utterly without means, a room, fire, and light, that the anguish of bitter struggle and destitution might not mar those ideal visions of purity and beauty which, given forth to the world by the press, sanctify the hearts and elevate the dispositions of men.

He had been a teacher. No one could realize more perfectly the necessity of a great public library which should be opened at night. Thousands toil through the day who would eagerly avail themselves of an hour or two at night to cultivate their minds and consult their authorities for literary ventures in a public library possessing the most perfect and most scholarly of catalogues. The public libraries of his native city were inaccessible after nightfall. Upon the careful examination of this literary want he erected a vast building which contained a library rivalling the magnificent collections of the Escurial. Here the poor, the daily toiler for bread could revel at night in the banquet of intellectual viands.

In the development of his stupendous charities he erected a night seminary of learning, where the young girls and men

who toil as teachers in the public schools by day, might receive a more thorough classical and linguistic education to qualify them for higher positions in educational establishments. There is no limit to the usefulness of the opulent who regard their stewardship of wealth as of God. In every enterprise, in every exalted charity, he possessed a noble coadjutor. When, wearied by his labors as a teacher, he had out of the generosity of his nature given an additional hour to the general culture of his Spanish scholar, he had like Baucis and Philemon entertained a divinity unawares, one who had become dear to him as life, one who combined the loveliest charms of person and manners with the intellectual culture of an Aspasia. During the witching hours devoted to those Spanish lessons that beautiful patrician had learned the true character of the man whose portrait seemed to look upon her from the walls of her uncle's oratory. Beautiful as Tithonus, eloquent as Aper, gifted with the deep mind, the noble heart, the invincible courage and the sublime Christian faith of Athanasius, how could any true Christian woman be brought so often in contact with him and not love him? He had appeared to leave her society lightly and unconcernedly. Then she withdrew into herself in anguish Strange indeed appeared to her the fact that in her exalted position in society she could not win him whom in her humble character she had brought to her feet. It was the constancy of the man's soul. Had she not in a moment of mirth assumed again her disguise at the cave when her companions were arraying themselves in the gay costumes which are there provided for the exploration, she never could have won his heart. Her love would have been as hopeless as Sappho's for Phaon. With the self-sacrificing spirit of Antinous he was about to hurl himself from the lofty rock of society for the sake of a dear memory, — the memory of the girl who had been his Evening Star. How ardently her noble heart responded to that constancy! She had appointed the place of meeting at the residence of her friend, Mrs Lagrange. Oh! the unspeakable joy of that moment when the disguise had fallen and she was folded in his arms!

. . . . . .

The summer sun had dropped below the horizon. The colors of the Western clouds were too subtle and brilliant for the *palette* of any human artist and elicited murmurs of admiration from an equestrian group who were waiting

before the gallery of "Sublimity" for a rider for a magnificent black gelding, which stood pawing the earth in impatience and was held at the bit by the hands of the ever-faithful groom, Mike. Mrs. May Earle was mounted upon Warwick. Near her was the milky-white Muslama, controlled by the beautiful widow of the lost Robert Melville. Colonel Baldgrave sat upon an iron-gray stallion with the erect and *distingué* bearing which had made him the cynosure of every eye during the civil war. Occasionally he indicated his nervous, impatient spirit by inquiries addressed to the groom, who had already exhausted his fund of information regarding the delay. The owner of the black gelding soon made his appearance, however, and hastening down the lawn apologized for the detention of the party, and then with a quick vault into the saddle bounded away with Warwick beside him.

"Now, madame," he said to his wife, "I propose to give you an opportunity to redeem Warwick's failure of yesterday. You recollect that Zetes beat him by half a head."

"That victory is disputed, Constant. But never mind. Warwick beat him the day before without any trouble. This day shall decide the question of supremacy if you say so."

"Very good, May. I directed Shorty to stand at the bridge and decide who crosses it first."

"All right, away we go," was the response, and the two urged their steeds forward, followed by Mrs. Melville and her escort.

The cripple stood beyond the fairy bridge and near to it that he might render a correct decision as to the contested question of speed. He saw at length the leading equestrians ascending the slope of the mountain at full speed. Zetes and Warwick passed up the slope like equals. Nearer and nearer they came, the western clouds growing darker every instant, until the steeds and their riders began to look hazy and dim in the gloaming. Quicker and quicker they swept forward and upward, reached the bridge, thundered over its planks side by side and were reined to a stop a few yards beyond.

"Who was ahead, Shorty?" called back the voice of Constant Earle.

"Warwick, sir."

"Oh, the boy is blind!" exclaimed the rider of Zetes.

"No, indeed!" laughed the triumphant May. "That won't do. Shorty was *your* umpire. How much in favor of Warwick, Shorty?"

"Jest about that much," said the cripple, measuring off the length of his forefinger.

"Botheration!" exclaimed Constant Earle; "there's no chance for Zetes among all these retainers of Warwick. Won by the length of his *ear!* What stuff!"

Chapter LIV.

Illi Mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.

BACON.

Upon the expiration of the lease of Mr. Secor the possession of the Earle mansion upon the avenue reverted to Constant Earle as the heir of his brother. The partition of the great estate had given this ancient property of his family to the younger brother. The mansion which the merchant-prince had occupied at the time of his death was allotted to Mrs. Melville. Constant Earle, ardently attached to the memory of his grandfather, desired to occupy the more venerable and spacious dwelling of the older generation. His wishes were consulted in the partition, and upon the expiration of the lease he prepared to renovate the old house and make such alterations as the taste and wishes of his beautiful wife suggested. Upon removing the mantel-piece in the front, or blue and salmon room, of Montrose Earle's suite, the workmen discovered that the projection of the chimney into the apartment had singularly enough become detached from the wall. Upon closer inspection it was manifest that the wall paper had never covered the angle made by the wall and the projection of the chimney. A cleat had been attached to the chimney, over which the wall paper was pasted and appeared to have sprung backward from the wall, leaving a dark crevice. The attention of the owner was called to the matter, and upon probing the crevice with a chisel what was his amazement to see the whole chimney, or what appeared to be a chimney, swing back on hinges

like a door, and expose the entrance to a narrow and long apartment. Procuring a light he opened this novel door still wider and entered this unknown chamber. He was alone. The workmen had gone home for the night. Holding his lamp aloft he walked along this mysterious passage which had evidently been used as a chemical laboratory. Every appliance and convenience for chemical experiments were scattered about, and on shelves, neatly arranged, were innumerable vials and jars of glass.

Passing along this mysterious hall of science or superstition, Constant Earle encountered a table of glass, on which were several knives of glass and an elegant and powerful Groves battery. Several jars of chemicals were standing upon the table, over which his eyes ran hastily, and then opened in horror upon a fearful image seated in a chair at the extreme end of the table. It was the fleshless figure of a human being whose eyes were looking towards him. Who was the skeleton? He approached it and found that it was chained to the back of the chair. The man had evidently been a prisoner. It appeared that rats had gnawed away every particle of flesh, for fragments of his garments were scattered about the floor as if they had been torn away by teeth. Nothing remained but the white skeleton sitting erect before the table. There was no evidence of violent death. There sat the unknown silently alone. The awe-struck spectator soon found at the foot of the chair a gold watch and chain. Opening the timepiece he found engraved within it "Robert Melville." One of the covers contained a miniature, which subsequently was identified as the one given to the deceased by Lord Carnochan. How had this death occurred? Why was the unfortunate young man chained? How long had he been there a helpless prisoner? Further examination revealed another skeleton lying upon the floor and clinched in one of the bony hands was a brazen laver. Shattered fragments of some thick glass vessel were discovered near to the prostrate form, which was that of a man of medium height and powerful frame. The author conjectured at once that he had been destroyed in some chemical experiment with explosive gases. Fragments of the glass vessel were found adhering to and bedded in the plastering of the room. Proceeding along the hall he discovered steps leading down into the lower story of the house

and terminating in a hall which led away between the buildings into a lane in the rear. He opened a small narrow iron door, painted like the rest of the dwelling, and lo! the lane appeared before him. No doubt the secret way was the work of a former generation. The dwelling was ancient, and the passage had similar evidences of age.

Returning to the laboratory above, he noticed for the first time a small writing-desk which was unlocked. In it were papers in the handwriting of his brother, and *a will* of his father executed at a period subsequent to the date of the instrument under which Montrose Earle had claimed the property. This later will divided the estate of his father equally among the two brothers and the sister. Why had the father disinherited the younger children by the previous will? Montrose Earle had manifestely concealed the last will, which would have given all the children competence. This mystery was subsequently solved by one of the lawyers for whom Constant Earle had copied legal papers in the day of his poverty and distress. Upon an accidental employing of this lawyer to transact some business for him, he learned that for a brief period his father had labored under aberration of mind.

Among the letters in the desk addressed to Montrose Earle was one from a female relative, advising him that his sister had been ruined by a young English nobleman, and that the issue of that illegitimate union was at that date provided for in a cottage in the country.

Upon these evidences, after a consultation with his wife, Constant Earle arrived at the following conclusion: That Melville had been allured into this secret retreat and murdered, or that he had been held a close prisoner and met his death by the explosion which killed Montrose and awakened the Reverend Thomas Delano and his niece from their slumbers. The motive of imprisoning or murdering him must have been the fancied dishonor of his sister. It was deemed wise to withhold this secret discovery from the widow of Melville. Lord Carnochan approved of the decision which veiled forever from the world the solution of the mysterious disappearance of the learned and elegant but infidel master of "Silvicola."

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